OTHER BOOKS BY QUENTIN REYNOLDS

The Curtain Rises
Dress Rehearsal
Only the Stars Are Neutral
Convoy
London Diary
The Wounded Don't Cry

Quentin Reynolds'

OFFICIALLY DEAD

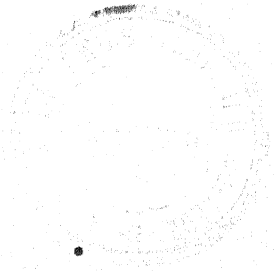
THE STORY OF

COMMANDER C. D. SMITH



RANDOM HOUSE

New York



«« CHAPTER ONE »»

DECEMBER 7th is a date that means a great deal to a great many people. Those of us who were in Shanghai in 1941, however, remember December 7th as just another rather chilly day when we cursed the inadequacy of the heating systems and dropped into the American Club for a Scotch and water. The war began for us, in Shanghai, on December 8th. Except for several officers attached to the U. S. Embassy, I was the only naval officer in China then, and part of my job was to keep my ear to the ground. I had been doing that in China for several years. I had piloted Japanese cruisers and destroyers in and out of Shanghai, and a pilot gets many opportunities to listen. I had friends among the French and British in Shanghai, and whispers which came to my Chinese friends floated along to me. I knew we were going to get hit sooner or later; our whole Navy knew it. But we didn't know when.

On December 1, 1941, I donned my naval uniform under orders from Admiral Glassford, then in the Philippines with other naval officers formerly stationed in China. The air was thick with tension. Japanese friends weren't behaving normally. Not that they were unfriendly or sullen. They just acted differently. My foreign and Chinese friends were uneasy. They couldn't explain why. When they walked along

noon a Japanese naval officer named Otani phoned me. I knew him casually around Shanghai.

"I have some turkeys a friend sent me from Chu San Islands," he said, after he concluded his polite, hissed greetings. "I'd like to send you a couple of them."

"That would be nice, Otani San," I said.

"I will send them in the morning. Where will you be at eleven o'clock?" he asked.

"On the *Wake*, I imagine," I told him, wondering idly why he couldn't just send them to the ship or to my apartment.

"You'll be on the *Wake*?" he repeated. "Fine, I will send the turkeys there."

Commander Otani was probably phoning plenty of foreigners, finding out where they would be at eleven the next morning. I was slightly puzzled by his phone call. It fitted into the pattern of the past few weeks. Our Jap acquaintances were indeed acting oddly. But the call didn't prevent me from sleeping well that night. That is, until 4:20 A.M., Shanghai time. I shared an apartment with Bruce Jenkins, an insurance man. He shook me awake to tell me that my quartermaster from the *Wake* was calling. At sea you get into the habit of waking suddenly—not gradually. You're asleep one moment and wide awake in another. I didn't need to hear my quartermaster's excited voice to wake me.

"Pearl Harbor has been bombed!" he blurted out. "The Japs have demanded that we surrender the *Wake*."

"I'll be right down," I said, and hung up. Jenkins called for a cab while I dressed. It appeared promptly. The driver didn't seem curious when I told him to drive to the docks.

The city was asleep. There was no moon and the streets

were weighted with darkness and silence. It was chilly, but in my haste I hadn't picked up a coat. The driver turned a surprised face to me when I told him to hurry. This was it, all right, I reflected. This was the storm I had been waiting for. A few blocks from the waterfront we were stopped by Japanese soldiers with rifles and fixed bayonets. I barked angrily in Chinese that I had to get to the *Wake*, but they shook their heads and told the driver to turn around. They saw my uniform but made no move to arrest me. We turned and tried another route to the Bund. Five times we were stopped by Japs and each time turned back. But finally we arrived at the pier. There were some twenty Jap soldiers there but they didn't molest me. However, I wasn't permitted to board my ship. It was in the hands of the Imperial Japanese Navy. My quartermaster was there and he told me what had happened. In anticipation of such a move I had mined the ship; that is, I had fixed high-explosive charges, but the Japs had acted quickly and my men had no chance to set off the charges and destroy the ship. A Jap boarding party had come alongside and had stepped on deck, the freeboard being a mere two feet. The Jap officer had merely poked a gun into the ribs of the man on watch and told him that he was taking over the ship. At that moment the radio operator had come running out of his shack. He had just received the news of Pearl Harbor and wanted to report to me. Another gun in his ribs silenced him. It was as easy as that. Resistance would have been completely useless.

My quartermaster had just finished telling me all this when the still-dark night was shattered by heavy firing. These, I thought, were five-inch guns. There were flashes from the

opposite shore as well as from a destroyer faintly visible up-river. They were firing at the *HMS Peterel* (pronounced petrol), a British gunboat in command of an old friend, big, hearty sixty-three-year-old Lieutenant Polkinghorn. He had received news of Pearl Harbor from British Intelligence about 4 A.M. He had put his men at battle stations. At 4:20, a Japanese officer, Captain Ikushima, had come aboard the *Peterel* and had announced that a state of war now existed between Britain and Japan and had demanded that the *Peterel* surrender to him. Polkinghorn had refused curtly. The Nip bowed politely and descended to his small boat. The boat pulled some 300 feet away and then the Jap captain had fired a Very pistol into the air. Immediately .75 mm field guns stationed on the French Bund and on Pootung Point opposite opened fire as did a destroyer which was moored alongside the Bund opposite the Shanghai Bank Building. Then a Japanese gunboat moored to the customs jetty also opened up on the hapless British ship. The *Peterel* was swamped with this concentrated gunfire. Obviously the guns had all been trained on the *Peterel* and were just waiting for the Very signal to start shooting. Polkinghorn, seeing that his position was helpless (he had been unable to return a single shot), told his crew to abandon ship and make for shore. Those who were still alive got into a motor boat that had been readied and shoved off. The blackness of the night was thinning out a bit now, and I could see the small boat clearly. The men were speeding frantically for shore, a shore lined with Japanese soldiers. Jets of water sprung up, framing the boat, and then a shell hit her. The boat burst into flames and capsized. I stood there watching, unable to do anything

but clench my fists and curse the Japs who were committing this deliberate murder, for murder it was. The survivors started to swim ashore. The heavy guns stopped firing and the soldiers raised their rifles. This was great sport for them. The water around the bobbing heads was alive now with small spurts. The Japs' aim was bad. It got better as the desperate swimmers neared shore. Then occurred one of the most amazing acts of bravery I have ever seen. Almost as though it were prearranged by signal, sampans, those small Chinese oar-driven craft, crept out from the Shanghai shore toward the men in the water. Ignoring the heavy fire from perhaps a hundred rifles they approached the survivors. I saw one sampan reach a man and try to pull him into the boat. He was too weak. He just held on to the gunwale and the sampan towed him in—towed him right toward shore and the shooting soldiers. I found out afterward that that was Polkinghorn with a piece of shell in his rump and one finger severed.

I saw one swimmer lying on his back, towing a second man who was evidently wounded. They drew the fire of the Japs. The head of the wounded man jerked several times when bullets hit. He was dead now, but his shipmate kept on swimming doggedly until a bullet hit him. His head twisted to one side and both men disappeared beneath the water.

Out in the river the *Peterel* was burning. The shooting had stopped and the only sound was the crackling of the flames. I thought that all of the survivors had died. I found out later that I was wrong. Her crew of fourteen had one hundred per cent casualties, but six of the fourteen, all wounded, somehow managed to make shore. There was nothing I could do

here. Besides, I had duties ashore. I decided to leave and wondered whether or not I'd be allowed to. The Jap soldiers looked at me curiously as I walked past them to my waiting taxi. I stepped in and told the driver to go to the consulate. He said nothing, looked impassive and started his motor. This touch of normality in a crazy world was comforting. It was almost light now. A rather sullen dawn had replaced the darkness, but there was no sun. The sun didn't rise on December 8th, Shanghai time.

The consulate was locked when I arrived. It was 5:30. I had no key to the big building. The American Consulate occupied three floors of the fifteen-story building once owned by T. V. Soong, but now known as the China Development Building. While I was wondering how to get in, one of the consuls, Mr. Berger, came along. He nodded tersely. He had been informed by someone. His key opened the door and we walked up the five flights to my office. I reached for the phone. This was D Day for us—a D Day we had rehearsed and planned and now we only had to put our plans into operation. Only one unforeseen element had entered the situation. We had always believed that we would have some warning of the Jap attack. Our plans were formulated on that presumption. But the Japs had done their work well. I phoned the four radio men I always kept on shore. Technically they were members of my *Wake* crew. I told them to hurry over as quickly as possible. My phone wasn't tapped; you can tell if a phone is tapped, all right. I smiled at the stupidity of the Japs for not immediately putting monitors on our consulate telephones. It is the first thing any intelligent G-2 organization would have done. The four men ap-

peared quickly and I told them the news in one sentence. "The Japs have bombed Pearl Harbor." That was all I knew, but it was enough.

It meant that a state of war now existed between us and Japan. It meant that all secret papers had to be destroyed at once before they fell into Jap hands—Code books, cable messages, the names of our agents in China, etc., etc. Berger and other vice-consuls who had arrived were busy destroying the consulate records. It was about seven o'clock now.

My radio men wasted no time. We had a fine short-wave transmitter on the sixth floor. The Japs didn't know anything about this—we hoped. We also had sets in Nanking, Hankow, Tientsin, Peking, Tsing Tao and Che Foo. My men set to work raising our operatives in those cities, telling them what the score was and ordering them to destroy their papers and their radio equipment. We raised Pearl Harbor and Cavite and received a more detailed report about the attack. We also received many dispatches from the State and Treasury Departments. The morning wore on and our work was just about done. As soon as the Japs came we would destroy our transmitter. The men had axes at hand. About 11:30 they arrived. Looking out of the window of my office I could see them with their fixed bayonets. They trooped into the building. Now they pulled another stupid stunt. Instead of immediately rushing up the stairs to the consulate offices (the only objective in the building worth their attention) they went from floor to floor looking for God knows what. I stood at the head of the stairs, waiting for them to appear. I would then give a shouted signal to my men a floor above, who would wield their axes and

make a shambles out of our lovely transmitter. The men were still in touch with Pearl Harbor and Cavite. A Jap in uniform appeared at the foot of the stairs and began to climb toward me. I turned to shout but then took another look at his uniform. It wasn't an army uniform. It was the uniform of a messenger from the cable office. He had a cable for the United States Consulate. He had gone past the forty or fifty Jap soldiers below. They just hadn't bothered to stop him. I had to sign for the cable. To the uniformed boy this was the most important thing in the world. I had to go back into my office to get a pencil. I signed, and he left quite happy, bowing politely and nodding good-byes. It was a routine cable from Washington but it might have been an important one. My contempt for the stupidity of the Japs increased. The Jap is a stupid, unreasoning animal. He's brave and he can take a terrible physical beating without a whimper and he can fight on an empty belly—but he's stupid.

A few minutes later the Nip soldiers, having searched the floors below, now gave us their attention. As they started up the stairs I shouted my signal and a moment later heard the sound of axes smashing against fragile tubes and heavier metal equipment. They too heard the sounds and looked up but did nothing about it. The Japs motioned me into my office. A moment later I heard men descending the stairs from above. They were my four men. Through the open office door I saw them pass. They were wearing overcoats over their uniforms. Some clever vice-consul had given them coats belonging to the consulate staff and the four men just walked out. Outwardly they were in civilian clothes,

hence they were civilians. If they were civilians they were diplomats, and diplomats, for the moment at least, enjoyed immunity. I went to the window and watched them emerge. They walked right past the Jap soldiers as if they didn't see them. It didn't mean much perhaps, they'd be caught later, but it was a magnificent gesture of thumbing their noses at the Japs. I laughed out loud, and the Jap soldiers with their fixed bayonets who now crowded my office looked at me suspiciously. Two of them grabbed me rudely and began to search my pockets when a sharp voice from the doorway stopped them. This was Commander Ito, a Jap naval officer in charge of the party. I had known him in the course of my Shanghai duties and had always regarded him as an amiable sort of chap with a great respect for naval tradition. It was rather an anomaly that this naval officer should be in command of a group of army men but apparently the Jap Navy was in charge today. He bowed to me.

"A state of war now exists between Japan and America," he said solemnly to me. "Will you surrender to me?"

I nodded. That's what I was there for—to surrender.

"You are in the custody of the Imperial Japanese Navy," he said in pretty good English. "You will be treated as an officer and a gentleman."

"Thank you, Ito San," I said.

"Where is your sword?" he asked.

"It is on my ship." I couldn't refrain from asking him why he wanted my sword.

"I wanted you to wear it when leaving this building," he said simply. "That will let everyone know that you are being treated as an officer and a gentleman, in accordance with

your rank. It will let them know that you are under the protection of the Japanese Navy."

While he was talking two Jap soldiers went to the window. Earlier one of the vice-consuls had put out the American flag. The two Japs began to haul in the halyards when they were interrupted by a bull-like roar. It came from Rhody Hall, one of the senior vice-consuls. He ran toward them and threw them aside.

"No God damn Jap is going to put his filthy hands on the American flag!" he shouted. He turned his back to them and began to haul in the flag himself. I expected that they would plunge their bayonets into his unprotected back. By now there were eighteen men and three officers in the room. They just stood there staring at Rhody. Calmly, slowly he hauled in the flag. He folded it neatly and then walked to the safe in the corner of the room. Rhody was a big man, six-foot-four. His size and perhaps the supreme indifference on his face awed those Japs. My heart warmed to this display of courage. I had known Rhody casually; he was the typical suave, well-dressed, soft-spoken State Department career man. He had that indescribable State Department manner about him, but now I realized that it was only a veneer. Underneath that well-dressed exterior there was bravery and toughness and real militant Americanism. To this day I don't know why he wasn't bayoneted immediately. He must have expected it. But they never touched him. When he had put the carefully folded flag into the safe he locked it, twirled the knob and walked out of the room calmly. I've seen hundreds of examples of bravery but never one greater

than that of Rhody Hall, the morning of December 8th, Shanghai time.

Now I was alone with the eighteen Japs. They shuffled their feet uneasily, looking to Commander Ito for orders. He looked at me unhappily. Apparently, he had been given orders to seize me, but his orders didn't go beyond that. He was one of the few Japs I ever knew with a large protruding jaw. He looked like a very tough citizen indeed and in a fight I'm sure he would have been murderous—but he was steeped in naval tradition, and the old Japanese naval tradition is not unlike ours. The Japanese Army? That's something else again; but I seldom saw individual Japanese naval officers who were brutal or who disregarded rank even among helpless prisoners. Believe it or not, there are some good Japs. No one living knows more about the barbarous cruelties practiced by the Japs than I do. I've seen them hold burning cigarette ends against the naked bodies of Americans and British and I've seen them torture men with their water cure. I'll talk about that later. But I still say—and this may sound like treason—I find it impossible to hate the Japanese as a people. I know some good ones, and I'll tell you about them later, too. Now Commander Ito was a good one.

Finally he received orders as to my disposal. He told me that we were going to the American Club just up the street. I was the only one to be arrested. Downstairs there were two lines of Jap soldiers outside the building with fixed bayonets. I had to walk the gauntlet through this lane of soldiers. A crowd had gathered to watch the fun. But it was a curious not a hostile crowd. A friend of mine was stand-

ing beyond the cordon of soldiers, and I called out gaily, "Hello, Jimmy." This friend with whom I'd had dozens of drinks at the American Club, this pal of ten years' standing, looked away with a gesture of annoyance. He didn't want attention drawn to the fact that he knew me. I think I went white. Then there was a commotion, the sound of scuffling, and a girl hurled herself through the cordon, threw her arms around me, kissed me on the cheek, and said, "Good luck, Commander."

She was a girl who worked in the consulate and, lest I give the impression of romance, I hasten to add that I only knew her as Miss Cavender, an employee of the consulate. To this day I don't know her first name, but I'll never forget her. She had the same kind of Americanism in her heart that prompted Rhody Hall to shove the Japs aside upstairs. She had seen how my friend Jimmy had rebuffed me and it outraged her American sense of decency. It was a warming experience. Trouble either brings out the best in people—or the worst. It was good to know in Shanghai that December 8th brought out the best in most Americans who were there.

I was marched to the American Club just next door. The Japs had wasted no time in taking over, the first sign of good sense they had shown as yet. It was a fine building filled with happy memories for me. As we went in I saw soldiers leaving with arms loaded with books. I felt like yelling a protest. The club had one of the best libraries in the Orient, and it seemed a sacrilege to see these books carried away by ignorant Japanese soldiers. Following the Nazi example, they burned all the books—including works

of Lafcadio Hearn, who wrote so beautifully of the culture of Japan and the beauty of their poetry.

We walked by the big room where Americans had met nearly every afternoon to comfort each other in their homesicknesses. No matter how each of us claimed to love the Orient, down deep we were homesick and our almost daily meetings around the famous American Club round table was a pretty clear indication of that. I caught a glimpse of that table as I passed the open door of the club room. I had sat there and swapped yarns with friends for twenty years. I had listened to red-headed H. R. Knickerbocker's tales of Germany there and had talked with Jimmy Young of INS about the mysteries of the Orient. I had learned to respect the brilliance and courage of J. B. Powell there and I had succumbed to the charm of the late Douglas Fairbanks at that table. I had met Ronald Colman and Roy Chapman Andrews there, and Somerset Maugham. Old shipmates, like Mark Hanna and Floyd Gibbons, had sat with me there and we had told pleasant lies and had laughed and sown the seeds of everlasting friendship around the old mahogany table. Now a group of Jap officers sat around it.

It was noon. No one at the club seemed to know what to do with me, either. Obviously they were awaiting orders from higher echelons. Finally those orders came and we all went back into the cars and headed for the oddly named Broadway Mansions, a fine sixteen-story apartment hotel. They took me to the fifth floor but they didn't question me. I was treated as a naval officer and quite satisfied with my lot. Of course I was living in a fool's paradise, but I didn't know it then.

Eventually an important man came into the room. The soldiers stood up and bowed humbly. He was a civilian named Sugino, and he held the rather strange position of civilian aide to Admiral Maikita, Commander-in-Chief of the Shanghai area. I knew Maikita well. Sugino was a director in the Nippon Yusen Kaisha Company, the world's largest shipping line. He was a brilliant man and a genial one. The Admiral had sent Sugino to look after me, which was all to the good. Sugino told me that I would be taken to the Old Mint. Was there anything I wanted? Well, I wanted my clothes and toilet articles and some cigars and some pipe tobacco. Sugino solemnly promised to bring this gear to me from my apartment. He did too—a week later.

We left for the Old Mint at the end of Gordon Road. This building hadn't been used as a Mint for many years. It had the appearance of a deserted loft building. The local Japanese police, however, had found a use for it. Its empty rooms were stocked with furniture they had stolen. I was ushered into one of these rooms, half-filled with decrepit tea tables, chairs, couches and bric-a-brac. There was a cot in one corner. Two soldiers guarded the open door. It was late afternoon now and I was getting restless and hungry. Then I heard a voice. It was a magnificent, full-throated voice I had heard a thousand times before, but never had I heard it spill forth such invective as now. It was the voice of an old friend, Commander John B. Woolley of His Majesty's Navy. In a sense, he was my opposite number in China; he was the ranking British naval officer. He was shouting from the floor below, and I am sure his voice carried all over the building and spilled out into the streets.

"You dirty bastards," he was yelling, "leaving a brave man there dying! I'll cut the throats of every damned one of you, you heathen . . ." It went on and on. They had brought Lieutenant Polkinghorn and the surviving members of his crew to the Old Mint. They were in the cellar, and they had had no medical attention. I told the guards I wanted to go downstairs and see Woolley. They argued for a moment but let me go ahead. It was as pleasant a reunion as was possible under the circumstances.

"We planned to meet at the club at five o'clock," Woolley said. "I guess we won't be able to make it."

"I guess not, John," I told him gravely.

An officer came and we told him we wanted to see Polkinghorn. Reluctantly he let us go down to the cellar. Polkinghorn was lying there, more dead than alive. His finger hung by a shred, but the bleeding had stopped. He was suffering badly from shock. One can die from shock without having the skin broken. In the throes of shock, one is very susceptible to pneumonia, and the best defense is to be warmly clad. Powers of resistance are low; strength and vitality have gone. In short, you're damn near dead.

Poor Polk lay there, his face grayish. His eyes stared at us but he didn't see us. Shock had numbed his pain, and his thinking processes had come to a stop, which was merciful but dangerous. In the chill of that miserable basement he had only one light blanket over him and he was clad only in his underwear—still wet. Woolley kept muttering, "God damn lousy bastards."

I was to spend a lot of time with Woolley during the next three years, and I couldn't have picked a better man.

If there is a finer man than an old-line British naval officer I haven't met him. Courage? The British naval officers get an extra dose with their first stripe. I've had many an argument with hard-headed stubborn British naval officers and at times I could cheerfully have slit the throats of some I've known—but they know how to fight and they know how to die and those are two good things to know.

The Jap officer came back and hustled us upstairs. I was worried lest Woolley reach out and strangle the man, but he didn't. I'd be no good to the Navy dead—nor would he. If you're a Navy man you don't stop working just because you've been captured. Now, as a prisoner, it was up to me to keep my eyes and ears open. Some day I might have a chance to report what I had learned.

I was ushered up to my storeroom again, and Woolley was put in a room on the same floor. It was dusk and my room looked less inviting than ever. I was hungry too, and when I complained a few times they brought me a dish of rice and a plate of vegetable mess. I've had rice in almost every part of China. I've shared rice with coolies and with bandits and with Chinese seamen, but I never tasted rice like this. It was literally uneatable. I yelled and the officer came up. He was a naval officer and he spoke Chinese. I told him about the filthy rice.

"You honestly can't eat it?" he asked politely. When I shook my head he went away. Within ten minutes one of my guards brought a new dinner. It was delicious.

"Your officers eat pretty well," I told the guard when he came to take the dishes away. "Good rations."

"That wasn't officers' rations," the guard said. "That was

the lieutenant's own food. He brought it from home. He gave you his dinner."

Maybe the next day that officer would be bayoneting me, but that night I felt very friendly toward him. Well-fed now, I lay down and started thinking of escape. I had been a prisoner for about ten hours, but I didn't want to waste any time. From that moment I never really gave serious thought to anything but escape. I lived with that thought always. I lay there on the cot and finally dozed off. I was awakened by the sharp glare of a flashlight in my face. The guards wanted to make sure I was still there. Ten minutes later that flashlight stabbed my eyes again. The third time it happened I got mad. I leaped up, grabbed the guard and threw him on the bed. He began yelling. The other guard hurried in, dropped his rifle and tried to pry me loose from the first guard. Their yells brought the officer upstairs. Believing that a good attack is the best defense, I started talking before the guards could get in a word edgewise.

"They won't let me sleep!" I yelled. "Every ten minutes they turn that light on my face. They can see that I'm here from the door. Make them stop flashing that light on me!"

The officer thought my request reasonable enough, and he ordered the two guards out of the room. I lay down again but this time I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking of the murders I had seen committed that morning in the river. I knew the tenacity and dogged persistence of the Jap, and I knew his fanaticism, too. It would be a long war and I'd be out of it—stuck here in Shanghai or some other prison camp. Why had I ever taken on this job? Why hadn't I stuck to my

freighters? Why hadn't I gone into the business of catching snakes? That was one thing I really could do. Lying there, I grinned and thought of those days down in Florida when I spent all my time fishing and catching rattlesnakes. But I had been christened Columbus Smith. A man with that name couldn't settle down.

I was in this war until the finish, even though I had to fight it from behind bars. But it wouldn't be too bad, I thought. I had plenty of friends in Shanghai—French, German, Italian, Chinese—even Japanese. When things got squared away I'd get in touch with them. And I was in the custody of the Imperial Japanese Navy, thank God. They were a decent lot and I knew I'd be well treated. That's what I told myself anyway—and I fell asleep.

«« CHAPTER TWO »»

THE next morning, after a sickening breakfast of congee (a rice gruel), Woolley and I were removed from the Old Mint. They put us in separate cars and gave us the honor of quite a bodyguard. One car went ahead, loaded with armed Japs. Then came Woolley's car followed by mine. A fourth car, filled with Nip soldiers, brought up the rear, and on either side of this cavalcade was a motorcycle with sidecar replete with machine gun. Shanghai hadn't changed much in the past twenty-four hours. There were a few more uniformed soldiers on the streets and invariably they had bayonets fitted to their rifles, but that was all.

We were taken to the Japanese Naval Prison in Kiangwan Road. This building had never been intended for a prison; it had been a schoolhouse. Woolley and I were given separate rooms. Each room had a bed, a chair, a desk, and everything was clean. The whole building had been recently painted and, except for the confinement, we couldn't complain. The enlisted men in the prison (my men from the *Wake* and the survivors of the *Peterel*) didn't fare quite so well. They were eight in a room, but they had plenty of blankets and mattresses. There was one disadvantage to the place—they had forgotten bathing facilities. It was two weeks before we were able to get a bath.

They had brought Polkinghorn there and he was in pitiful shape. Woolley protested vehemently, but the Jap guards just looked unhappy and shrugged their shoulders. Even worse off than Polk was one of his seamen, who was suffering from second-degree burns. From the waist up his body was a mass of ugly, burned flesh. He was in constant agony. We had no drugs. All we could do was to pile wet cloths on his body. This seemed to ease his pain. His face was so swollen that he had lost the use of his facial muscles. He couldn't talk. It was four days before we succeeded in getting a doctor for Polk and his seaman. Then a Jap naval commander arrived and, when he saw the condition of both men, he was furious. A first-rate doctor, he immediately administered opiates to them and ordered an ambulance. While we waited for the ambulance, he talked. He talked very freely, as Japanese will do. He told me that he and the whole Jap medical corps were disturbed over the condition of their men in Malaya. They were practically all suffering from malaria or yellow fever.

"It may be we do not give them the correct amount of quinine," he said worriedly. "Do you know how much quinine your doctors give in treating malaria?"

Neither Woolley nor I did. The Jap commander was disappointed. It never crossed his oriental mind that we would have done everything in our power to further the progress of their malaria or yellow fever. He was a doctor—a good doctor—who was interested only in his profession. When the ambulance came he insisted upon riding along with his patients. He wanted to treat them personally at the hospital. We learned afterward that he had, in fact, done a magnificent

job. He had amputated Polk's finger, removed the shrapnel from his rump, and cured the burned seaman. That last was a real medical feat for, when he left, the man was more dead than alive.

Now that I am home I constantly hear the phrase, "The only good Jap is a dead Jap." How can anyone hate a whole people? I find that such sentiments invariably come from people who have never fought the Japs or lived with them or even met any. This Japanese doctor was another example of a good Jap who had only one devotion—his science.

Our food at Kiangwan was pretty scant at first. It was also pretty bad and the naval officer in charge apologized after almost every meal. But he said we could send out for food if we wished. We certainly did wish and thereafter Woolley and I had one really good meal a day. Both of us had plenty of money. It was taken from us and exchanged for the puppet dollars. Needless to say, we got none the better of the exchange, but that didn't bother us any. We had friends outside and we could get money, if we really needed it. In addition to good food, we now had the daily papers delivered to us. The *Shanghai Times* and the *Evening Post* and *Mercury* were still operating. Americans were still running them and Americans and British were still running the banks. Of course, there was Japanese supervision, and we read about the confusion in the States, the panic on the West Coast, and of Japanese victories every day. We read of the destruction of the entire American fleet at Pearl Harbor. It wasn't very pleasant reading, and we had no way of knowing how much was truth and how much propaganda.

Our real source of information was the prison under-

ground. This operated in no organized manner that I could ever discover, but if something happened in Shanghai in the morning we'd hear all about it in the afternoon. We heard the story of the humiliation of the Germans on December 8th and that gave us many chuckles. A few weeks before, I had a drink with a German named Bornschein. In an affable mood, he had confided that he expected the Japs would soon strike at America.

"It will be very interesting," he said complacently, "to watch developments. Of course, the Japs believe that we will be their wholehearted allies. Well, we will, whenever we can use them but even they must admit that we and not they are the master race. And we have prepared. Oh, yes, we leave nothing to chance. We have a fine organization here in Shanghai. When war comes we will allow the Japs to do the fighting on this side of the world but we will do the leading. We will take over all the big industrial enterprises here—the banks, the newspapers, the Standard Oil. The Japs haven't brains enough to run such organizations. Yes, we will be ready."

On the afternoon of December 8th Nazi uniforms appeared for the first time in Shanghai. Groups of young Germans, all armed, rode about the city in trucks, looking for Jews to punish, looking for trouble. Jap soldiers stopped the trucks, took their guns away, and told them to go home and get out of their Boy Scout uniforms. If found in uniforms, they would be put under arrest. So the master race had to bow to the little sons of Nippon, and very galling it must have been to their pride.

We heard for the first time of the visit by Saburo Kuruso

and Admiral Nomura to Cordell Hull on December 7th and how they were both discussing peace with the Secretary of State, even as bombs fell on Pearl Harbor. We heard of the indignation felt by the American people over the incident, and over the apparent treachery of the two Japanese diplomats. I suppose the names of Kuruso and Nomura will always be anathema to Americans. As to Kuruso, I don't know, but I think history may exonerate Nomura. I became acquainted with Nomura in a rather curious way and I lunched with him the day before he left for Washington on his ill-fated (or treacherous) mission.

One day, late in November, I received a phone call from Shanghai's most distinguished Japanese—Kikuchi. Kikuchi was one of Japan's most venerated naval heroes. He had served under Admiral Togo in the Russo-Japanese War. As a young officer he had led the destroyer charge through the Straits of Tsu Shima, in 1904, a maneuver which just about clinched the war for Japan. Every honor the Emperor could bestow on him came his way. He had retired from the Navy but after a few years of inactivity had been called back as adviser to Admiral Koga, Commander-in-Chief of the China Sea Fleet. His work had earned him a promotion to Rear-Admiral. Then he had become a Shanghai pilot. To be exact, he had been admitted to the Shanghai Pilots' Association, one of the most exclusive organizations in the world. There were only forty of us and a waiting list of 35,000. No ship could sail up the Whangpu River and enter Shanghai unless one of us piloted it. I had joined the association in 1935, after being on the waiting list some twelve years. The job is one sought after by most sea captains. The reason is

obvious. We worked three or four days a week and made plenty of money. When the war broke out, our association consisted of five American pilots, eight Japs, twelve British, two Norwegians, two Danes, two Germans, four Frenchmen, one Hollander, one Italian, and three Chinese. We estimated the total tonnage to come into Shanghai over a five-year period and that determined the nationality of the pilots. One-eighth of the tonnage was American, therefore one-eighth of the pilots would be American.

Kikuchi was one of the Japanese pilots, highly respected and well liked by everyone. I wasn't surprised by his phone call. We pilots were like a family, spending a lot of time together when we were ashore. Kikuchi asked me if I'd be in the association office the next morning. I said I could be and we arranged to meet at 10 A.M. in the pilots' conference room. I was only mildly curious. It was probably some business in connection with the association. But it was nothing of the sort.

"I'm worried about the way things are shaping up," Kikuchi said.

"So am I," I admitted.

"Do you think America will get into this war?" he asked. "Will America fight?"

"If she is attacked, she'll fight," I said emphatically. "I think she may fight, anyway. Frankly, Kikuchi, the attitude of your government is not conducive to peace. I honestly think that you may lead us into war."

"That's what I'm afraid of," he nodded miserably. "I'd hate that, Smitty."

"I'd hate it too, but there it is."

"Do you know Admiral Nomura?" he asked.

I told him I had heard a great deal about the Admiral but had never met him.

"He's on his way to Washington to discuss peace terms with your Secretary of State. Nomura doesn't want war. He feels as I do. Smitty, I know Nomura well. We roomed together at the Naval Academy. We have served together and he's been my best friend for about forty years. I know him, believe me, and I know him to be a moderate, peace-loving man. He is greatly concerned about our relations with you people. Would you have lunch with him tomorrow? I want him to hear your views as a private American citizen."

"I'd be glad to meet him," I told Kikuchi. We met the next day at the Palace Hotel. Nomura, a tall, tidy man, was in civilian clothes. He was very affable and his affection for Kikuchi was obvious. These were, in truth, two old shipmates, who shared each other's thoughts. Nomura asked me the same questions that Kikuchi had asked.

"I can only speak for myself," I told him, "not for the country, nor for anyone else." I had thrust from my mind the fact that actually I was a naval officer, a fact which presumably the Japs didn't know. I was speaking as a private citizen, but I think my answers were those any informed American citizen would have given.

"I am really worried," Nomura said. "All governments have extremists in their cabinets. My country is no exception. In Washington I hope to arrange some basis for a firm and lasting peace between us."

"I hope you can do that," I said sincerely.

"So do I. So do I," he repeated fervently. If this man wasn't

sincere, I know nothing of human nature. He left for Washington the next day. In the light of what happened, of course, his name will be hated by generations of Americans. He sat with Cordell Hull talking peace while Jap planes sneaked over Pearl Harbor. Naturally everyone assumes that he and Kurusō knew just what was going on. They were in Washington merely to lull us into a false sense of security. That's what the world believes. I don't believe it for a moment. I am convinced that the Japanese government wanted to get rid of the moderate, peace-inclined Nomura. If he knew of the sneak punch Japan was preparing, he might have tried to prevent it. He might have raised his voice and shown the world that there wasn't complete unity behind the attack. I will always believe that he was sent to Washington, kept ignorant of the real facts, and used as a stooge by the militaristic government.

One day my four radio men, the four who had escaped from the consulate, walked into the jail. The Chilean Minister was now handling all diplomatic affairs for America, and he had suggested that they surrender. Unfortunately, they obeyed. I say unfortunately because during those early days it would have been comparatively easy for them to escape to Chinese-held territory.

With the crew of the *Wake* was my Chinese boy, Liu, a fine youngster whom we'd had aboard the ship for some time. Back in 1931, the year of the great Yangtse flood, the *Wake* was at Hankow. Some of the crew members had found a likable but very forlorn seven-year-old youngster wandering around the docks. His family had disappeared during the

flood. The men had allowed him to run errands for them and he was quick and intelligent and honest. They took him on as a sort of mess boy, errand boy and mascot. And he had grown up on the *Wake*. Now he was a well-built, keen-eyed boy of seventeen. He was much more American than he was Chinese. He talked excellent English and even in his thinking he was more Western than Eastern. I told the Jap naval officer in charge that Liu was my personal servant and he allowed the boy to take care of me henceforth. Liu could make bad food taste good; he could sew torn clothes and darn socks—there was little that he couldn't do. Now life wasn't bad at Kiangwan Road prison, and we had no inkling that conditions would change.

The ubiquitous Sugino, who was always turning up everywhere, visited me, anxiously inquiring for my health, apologizing because of the poor quarters. If there was anything I wanted from outside I could have it. If I had no money, I could sign chits. You seldom paid for anything in Shanghai —you signed chits and settled monthly. This system still continued during the first few weeks of the war. But there was nothing I wanted from outside. Then one day Sugino came to me in some excitement. The *Nitta Maru* was arriving the next day, loaded with prisoners from Wake Island. There were 2,000 prisoners on the ship, Sugino said, and if I liked he would arrange for me to visit them. We knew now that Wake Island had fallen, but it seemed incredible to me that 2,000 prisoners had been captured. I knew that the whole personnel of Wake Island—civilian, marine and naval —was only about 2,000, and it seemed unlikely that such a force would surrender en masse. Not United States Marines.

However, I accepted Sugino's invitation. I asked him if I could bring a marine warrant officer with me who had been left in Shanghai by the 4th Marines when they pulled out on November 28, 1941, and he agreed to that. This was Paul Chandler.

The next morning Sugino called for us. Our uniforms were in spick-and-span order, thanks to Liu, and we donned them. We would probably meet some high-ranking Jap officers and, if possible, I wanted to out-gold-braid them. We climbed into Sugino's big open car and I was amazed to notice that we didn't even have a guard. We drove to the Hong Kew wharf and there loomed the familiar lines of the big *Nitta Maru.* I knew the ship well; I had piloted her into Shanghai on her maiden voyage two years before. I knew her skipper too, a very religious man. In the chart room of all Jap ships you'll find a Shinto shrine. The chart room of the *Nitta Maru* had a shrine too, but it was an altar. The captain was a devout Catholic, one of the few Japs I ever met who was a Catholic. We went to the salon and found fifteen Jap naval officers there, including my friend the skipper. They all arose politely and saluted. They apologized because they would have to give me tea; in port the liquor stores were sealed. I sat next to a young naval lieutenant who had been assigned to customs duty. He was very unhappy about that.

"I would much rather be at sea fighting Americans," he said sadly.

"And I would be much happier killing Japanese than sitting in a jail," I told him, equally sad.

He smiled and raised his teacup. I clinked cups with him. Each of us drank to our ambition.

Then they said we could inspect and talk to the prisoners. I had brought seven cartons of American cigarettes with me and asked if I could distribute them. Permission was granted. Everything was friendly. Everything was fine. Until I saw the prisoners. They were all lined up on the aft deck and they looked pretty bad. They stared at us suspiciously, as well they might have. Here we were in clean uniforms, looking well fed, apparently on very friendly terms with the Jap officers. What were we? A couple of Quislings?

We were allowed to talk to the marine officers. They had had a terrible time. The trip had taken seventeen days. They had been confined in the lower hold with no washing or toilet facilities. They had been given only two bowls of congee a day. Captain Platt of the marines had complained about the sanitary conditions and a Jap guard had hit him over the back with a thick club about the size of a baseball bat. He had received no medical treatment. Actually, there were 1,600 men aboard. Of these, 400 were marines, the others civilians who had worked on Wake Island.

I distributed the cigarettes and told them I'd do what I could to get them better treatment. I turned to Sugino, who was standing beside me, and made a bitter complaint about the way the men had been treated. He was apologetic and full of promises that things would be easier henceforth for the men. My time was up now and Sugino escorted Chandler and myself back to the Kiangwan Road prison.

"They will be taken to a prison camp," Sugino said, "but you will remain here at Kiangwan Road. You are a prisoner of the Navy."

Sugino apparently didn't have as much influence as he

believed. The next morning at six we were routed out of bed and told to get ready for a move. Sugino was waiting for me with a long face. Woolley and I were to go to the *Nitta Maru* and join the other prisoners. I asked permission to bring Liu along and it was granted. We climbed into Sugino's car and again headed for the ship. We were each given a first-class stateroom. We had no idea where we were going. There was a telephone in my stateroom. I wondered whether I could put in a call to friends in Shanghai. Just for the hell of it, I decided to try. I picked up the phone and the ship's operator asked, "Number, please?" I gave the number and heard the phone ringing at the other end. Then the operator broke in, "You're a prisoner, aren't you?"

I told him yes, I was a prisoner.

"Prisoners," he said very formally, "are not allowed the use of a telephone."

Soon we cast off our lines and the big ship began to move. I was sure we were headed for Japan and that was a disheartening thought. It would be tough to escape from Japan. We went ten miles down river and tied up to a wharf. I recognized the place as Woosung, just a small Chinese village. Jap officers came for Woolley and me. We went down the gangway and waited. A company of Jap soldiers was drawn up alongside the wharf. Now the men from Wake Island started down the gangplank. Practically none of them carried baggage and all were dressed in tropical khaki clothes intended for the heat of Wake Island. But winter on Wake Island and winter in China are quite different. A bitter wind had come up, bringing a drizzle of rain with it, chilling the men to the bone. Jap soldiers stood on either side of

the gangplank yelling for the men to hurry. They held clubs and they hit the back of any who straggled. I yelled a protest to the officer in charge, and he snarled, "Shut up!" This was the Jap Army now, quite a different outfit from the Jap Navy. They made the men run, not walk, to an open space on the wharf and lined them up. Woolley and I were told to join them. Then a Jap captain spoke. The second mate of the *Nitta Maru* translated.

We were told that disobedience of orders, any attempt at escape, any destruction of property, or even any disrespect shown would be punishable by death. Then we were told to march. The road was lined with Chinese villagers and farmers. We learned later that they had been ordered out to view our humiliation. This was to impress them with the mighty power of the imperial empire and its military strength. We marched along silently, and the hundreds of Chinese who lined the roads were silent too. You could read the pity in their eyes. There wasn't an unfriendly face along that route. The rain slanted down and stung our faces. It was a long march, even though it was only four miles; it was long for the half-starved, shivering men from Wake Island. Occasionally, one of them would stumble and Jap guards would cry angrily and wield clubs. The sound of a club hitting the unprotected back of a man is a horrible one. Low, angry growls came from the others but there was nothing anyone could do. The Jap soldiers looked only too anxious to use their gleaming bayonets or their heavy clubs.

Finally we reached our destination. This was Woosung Prisoner of War Camp, a place I was to get to know very

well in the next few months. The camp consisted of seven barracks. We were formed into six columns and the Jap officer in charge made us a long speech. It took him nearly an hour to make it. He whipped himself into a frenzy, but nobody except myself knew what he was talking about. He spoke in Japanese and there was no translation. He elaborated on the punishments we would receive if we broke any of the camp rules. He told us that the war was practically over and he gave us the old, familiar nonsense about Jap superiority and the high destiny of the Japanese people. It was very tiresome but worse than that the rain had increased and the cold was bitter. Then we were marched into the barracks.

The barracks were partitioned off into large cells, each holding thirty-six men. A raised double-deck platform ran around the cell—plain boards—and these were the sleeping quarters. Each man was given four blankets, but they were very thin cotton blankets, not much protection from the winter weather. At midnight we were given a scanty bowl of rice soup, a horrible concoction. That night I met Commander W. S. Cunningham, who had been in command at Wake Island. He and I were given single cells in the same barracks, while Woolley, the other senior officer, had a single room in another barracks.

This was January 23rd. I finally realized that I had been living in a fool's paradise since December 8th. I had been well treated. I had been treated as an officer by the Japanese naval authorities. The Japanese Army treated us all as pigs, except they didn't bother to fatten us up. Why all of us didn't die from infection those first few weeks, I don't know.

Our toilet facilities were entirely primitive. The refuse drained into a ditch that surrounded our barracks, ditches originally intended for the drainage of rain water. But within forty-eight hours these ditches were nothing but evil-smelling cesspools. There was one source of water in camp —a surface well thirty feet deep. Drinking that water would have been equivalent to drinking prussic acid. At meal time we were given small cups of tea. We never drank anything else. Our food rations were scanty. Every twenty-four hours we were given fifty pounds of meat. Fifty pounds for 1,600 men (three pounds per 100 men). They used the meat to make soup. There was neither nourishment nor flavor in the soup. We were living in the midst of the finest farming land in the world but we never were given vegetables. We could look out over the surrounding country on clear days and see miles of cabbages (three kinds), potatoes, beans, peas, peanuts. We could hear the cheerful cackle of hens and knew that thousands of eggs were being laid every day within a radius of five or six miles, but we never saw an egg. This was great peanut country and we would have welcomed the vitamins in the peanuts, but none of this was for us. One bowl of soup three times a day and occasional bread—that was our diet. The food was cooked on open stoves and it was usually cold when it reached us. Several of the Wake Island civilians had been cooks and Woolley and I asked the commandant if he would allow our own cooks to prepare the food. He did and things were a little better, but even they couldn't stretch fifty pounds of meat to adequately feed 1,600 men.

The constant threat of disease was one of our chief en-

emies at Woosung. During this period we had bitterly cold weather, with temperature as low as fifteen degrees. The inadequately clothed men from Wake Island suffered intensely, since we had no heat at all. We were allowed to exercise every morning for an hour and during that time Woolley and I always got together to discuss escape. That thought obsessed us. Our camp was surrounded by a fence —alternate strands of barbed wire and electrically charged wire. We didn't know how or when, but we felt sure that we'd escape somehow. We received little news from outside and what we heard was all bad. We finally heard the story of Wake Island. The men felt pretty bad about that affair. They'd never really had a chance to fight. To the men, Captain Platt was the real hero of that tragedy.

Wake Island is a misnomer. There were really four islands. Captain Platt was in charge of the small north island. He had some sixty men and plenty of ammunition. The Japs quickly took the main island then they came after Platt and his men. Platt had machine guns and he blasted their landing craft, killing some 600 Japs. He was all set for a long siege, if need be, and then he received orders from Commander W. S. Cunningham to surrender. These orders were semaphored from the main island. Platt, thinking it might be a Jap trick, refused to obey the orders. Again the Japs attacked and again Platt and his men blasted them out of their assault boats. The next morning a boat carrying a white flag came across the lagoon which separated his position from the main island. It landed and Platt was amazed to see his pal, Major James Devereaux, step out. A dozen Jap soldiers were behind him, their bayonets touching his back.

"Stop, Jimmy, or I'll have to shoot!" Platt cried out.

"Can't help it," Devereaux called back calmly. "They've got their bayonets at my back. You are to surrender immediately. Orders," he added laconically.

"I won't surrender," Platt called. He was manning a machine gun himself, and his men were well entrenched in the coral and sand. Devereaux, under the stimulus of the bayonets, marched on.

"Stop, or I'll have to shoot!" Platt called out again.

"Okay. Okay. Shoot if you have to, but I can't stop," Devereaux called cheerfully.

He was fifty yards away now and Platt's men looked to him for orders. "God damn it, Jimmy, I couldn't shoot you," he said, and threw his gun to the ground.

And so Wake Island surrendered. The marines in Woosung prison refought that tragic little campaign a thousand times.

There was no torture practiced at Woosung, except insofar as our mode of life was, in a sense, torture. But there were what the Japs called "unfortunate incidents." Each Jap sentry seemed to make up his own rules, so that it was quite common for us to break a rule which we never knew existed. One officer, Lieutenant Robinson, USN, was severely beaten because he refused to crank a truck for some Jap guards. One civilian prisoner was shot and killed by a sentry for merely staring at the wire fence. We protested and an "inquiry" was held. The Jap commandant issued a statement saying that the affair was accidental and the sentry was returned to his post. Mark Staten, another American civilian from Wake, died at the camp in March, 1942. Staten was in

poor health when he arrived and the three American doctors had asked for special food for him. Their request had been refused. When Staten died the three doctors signed a death certificate certifying that he had died of starvation. The Jap commandant refused to accept the death certificate.

Finally the Red Cross, through the Swiss Consulate, managed to help a bit. The reason we had no heat in the barracks was lack of coal. We were allowed one bath a week, but the water was always ice cold and as many as 100 of us had to use the same water. The Red Cross managed to send us a weekly allotment of coal for heating the barracks and the water. The Japs regularly took about half this coal to heat their own officers' barracks, but we were allowed to keep and use the rest. Many a prayer went up for the Red Cross when we felt that first glow of heat creeping into our chilled quarters.

New prisoners were constantly arriving. One day a smart-looking group of 200 marines arrived. These were the legation guards from Pekin. It is the custom all over the world that legation guards enjoy diplomatic immunity and these men, of course, should have been repatriated. But the Japs weren't going by any rules. Instead, they sent the marine guard to Woosung. They had fine warm uniforms and heavy coats and blankets, and each man had baggage with him and some food. They were anxious to share their warm coats and blankets with the rest of us, but a rather amazing thing happened. Our men, who had been there for nearly a month, looked with suspicion on these newcomers, who, quite understandably, were bewildered by the hostile attitude. There was no reason for it, no way of rationalizing it. But the fact

remains that these well-fed, good-looking, well-clothed, and, believe me, well-intentioned marines were treated coldly and sullenly by their own compatriots. Confinement does strange things to a man's mind. The newcomers, seeing the emaciated bodies and drawn faces of the Wake Island men, did not resent their attitude at all. Within a few days, of course, common sense reasserted itself, the warm coats and blankets were shared, and they became a part of our community.

A really distinguished prisoner finally arrived. He was Sir Mark Young, who had been governor of Hong Kong. He was sixty-three and in bad health. Our doctors shook worried heads after they examined him. He had had two heart attacks recently, and they were afraid that a third would be fatal. But his precarious health did not impair either his good spirits or his great dignity. Sir Mark in many ways was the greatest man I ever met. He was certainly the most honest. Even Colonel Yusei, the camp commandant, was impressed with Sir Mark. He was puzzled by him and then, I think, he came to fear him. He had no weapons which would be of avail against the tall, elderly Britisher. Torture? Sir Mark's heart wouldn't have stood it. Abuse? Sir Mark's armor of dignity would only make any verbal attack look ridiculous.

We had heard that Yusei was going to line us up and ask us all to sign a pledge promising not to attempt to escape. If any of us escaped, Yusei, of course, would lose face badly. It might even be necessary for him to commit hara-kiri. Yusei was a nervous, hysterical man. Finally he did line us all up outside the barracks. He had the Americans on one

side, and the British, of whom there were now about 100, on the other. He read us a long tirade about the punishment we'd get if we tried to escape, the impossibility of escape. He told us we would have to sign an agreement not to escape. He had papers prepared and now would we march up to the table that stood in front of him and sign on the dotted line. He gave us a command. "Forward march!" Not a man moved. He gave the same command to the British. Not a man moved. He was screaming at us now and I thought he might have a fit. There was a wild look in his eyes. With a little extra effort we could drive this man insane, I thought. When he finished his tirade, Sir Mark, looking mighty impressive, even though he wore gray flannels and a shirt open at the neck, stepped forward.

"We, the officers, have ordered our men not to sign," he said simply. "Do not blame them. You cannot force them to sign an agreement which no military man has a right to sign."

That was all. We went back into our barracks, impressed by Sir Mark's courage and admiring his dignity. A few days later, Sir Mark, Woolley and I went to see Yusei. Sanitary conditions were such that we were in deadly fear of an epidemic or a plague. Sir Mark complained about the conditions and then, always courteous, his speech clipped and cold, he said a few words to Yusei that had the little man a quivery mass of indignation and fear.

"Forever your name will smell in the nostrils of mankind," Sir Mark said. "You will be linked with those who ordered men into the black hole of Calcutta. I may not live to see

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your shame but others will come after me and they will know you. They will curse you. And you will suffer.

"During the last war I fought the Germans. I was captured and when I tried to escape I was caught. The German officer who questioned me said, 'I do not blame you for attempting to escape. A true soldier would try to escape.' That is the officers' code the world over, Colonel Yusei. A soldier is bound to fight until he is dead. As long as he is alive he must make every effort to get back to his men and fight again. That is all, sir."

And we left Yusei literally foaming at the mouth. He was so angry and so fearful that he couldn't speak coherently. Actually he was a very small man in every way and the responsibility of running a camp of this size was too big for him. His discipline was bad. His men were lax and they showed little respect for him.

"If we keep after him, we'll drive him nuts," I said to Woolley.

"I hope we'll be out of here before then," Woolley said.

"We will," I told him.

Two weeks later, Yusei, in a desperate effort to save face, ordered us to sign the non-escape agreement again. We would have no food or bathing privileges or exercise until we did sign. Woolley, Cunningham and I took counsel. Signing the agreement obtained under such duress would mean nothing. It was sign or die. Unless you signed an agreement of your own free will it was not an agreement. You were not giving your word if a gun was held at your neck. We decided to tell the men to sign and they did. Sir Mark held out for two days. His sense of honor would not

permit him to sign an agreement he might be tempted to break. I argued heatedly with him. Finally, when I told him of the suffering he would cause his own men if he didn't allow them to sign, he capitulated—but he did it reluctantly.

Woolley and I were brimming over with plans for escape now. We were going to bring my Chinese boy, Liu, and Dan Teters. Dan Teters was a tough, hard man who would be good to have along in any fight. He had been in charge of construction at Wake Island. He was a quick-thinking man. Commander Cunningham knew we were plotting an escape and he wanted to come along, so we included him. We planned every detail meticulously. We would have to crawl about 300 yards over gravel to reach the wire. We would require heavy knee pads and we made them from old sacks scrounged here and there. We would need a shovel. That was essential. The lowest strand of wire was only about four inches from the ground. It was charged with 22,000 volts. We'd have to scoop out the earth under it so we could crawl through and clear the wire. Finally, on March 10, 1942, we were ready. That afternoon we stole a shovel. There was a small tea house where our tea was brewed every day. It was made in a 700-gallon tank and the tea was tossed in with a shovel. The shovel remained in the tea house all the time. Late that afternoon Woolley and I strolled over to the tea house which was only 100 yards from our barracks. There was no one there at this hour. Woolley grabbed the shovel and stuck the neck of it down his trouser leg. He pulled his shirt out and that hid the head of the business end of the shovel. We walked back to our barracks. Now all we had to do was to wait for darkness.

«« CHAPTER THREE »»

IT WAS the kind of night we had prayed for—dark, no moon, no stars. Our barracks had doors at each end, but one of the doors had been nailed fast. A sentry constantly patroled outside both doors. For the past three nights, Liu and I had been working quietly on the nailed door. We had loosened the nails so that they only needed a final pull. About ten o'clock the barracks were still. Every man there knew what we were going to attempt, although we hadn't told anyone because we knew they'd be questioned if our attempt was successful. If they didn't know our plans no information could be forced out of them. I knew they were half listening in the darkness of the long barracks, hearing our footsteps, hearing the rusty nails scrape out of the wood.

The door swung open and I slipped through, telling Liu and Cunningham to wait. A sentry patroled along the road in front of the barracks. His beat—I had measured it often enough—was 120 yards each way. It took him about a minute to walk the length of it. He sauntered casually and usually stopped at the end to chat to the next sentry in line. I waited for Woolley to come from his barracks. I waited and then froze. From around the corner of the barracks there came the sharp sound of boots on gravel. I stood there, thinking fast. An officer led the men and, because of

the darkness, he was swinging a flashlight. Its bright fingers reached out casually to the right and left. If they didn't hit me I'd escape unnoticed. But luck wasn't with me. The light hit me right at the knees. There was a sharp exclamation from the officer and the light traveled up to my face. The Japs stopped, just looking at me.

"What are you doing here?" the officer said harshly.

"Just looking at the stars," I said. The soldiers muttered among themselves.

"We ought to investigate," one said. Another said, "He's just a damn fool foreigner. Let's go and have dinner." The flashlight wavered, and the officer said, "All right." They moved on down the length of the barracks, their feet crunching on the gravel. "Stupid pigs," I muttered to myself. "Stupid imbeciles."

Had they been bright, they would have noticed the heavy knee pads of sacking I was wearing; they would have noticed that there were no stars; they would have noticed that I was at the wrong end of the barracks—the end which was closed with a nailed door. I sensed rather than heard Woolley's approach. He just gripped my arm and squeezed it. We didn't need any words. I motioned to Cunningham and Liu to come out. We had rehearsed this so often that we just acted without speaking. Woolley, carrying the shovel, would go first, followed by Cunningham. The sentry passed and his steps disappeared. Woolley and Cunningham took three steps and then hit the ground. They'd have to crawl because even in the darkness a sentry might spot an upright figure. They crawled away and I heard that damn shovel hitting the gravel. It sounded to me as if everyone

within miles could hear it. They went on and now the footsteps of the sentry came again. Woolley and Cunningham stopped crawling. The sentry passed within perhaps twenty feet of them but kept on going. I heard the crunch of the gravel again—and then silence. They were beyond the gravel and on grass and earth now. The fence was about 300 yards away.

The sentry came back, passed, and Liu, Teters and I dropped to the ground and followed Woolley and Cunningham. It was hard to move quietly over that gravel. Liu followed me like a wraith. We heard the sentry returning and we buried our noses in the gravel and waited. If he decided to switch on his flashlight we were lost. But he didn't. He kept on walking, and then we too were over the gravel and heading for the fence. Woolley was already wielding the shovel. He wasn't making a sound. He scooped up a few shovelfuls of earth and then whispered, "Here I go, boys." He lay flat and inched himself under the wire. That half minute seemed an eternity. If even a button of his shirt touched that wire there would be a blinding flash and Woolley would be burned to a crisp. But he was efficient. He got through and we heard him chuckling. Cunningham followed. Then Teters. Then Liu. I was last. I began squirming under the wire. Woolley had my legs, pulling me gently. Instinctively I raised my head to see how close I was to the bottom strand of the wire. I had a good two-inch clearance. It was that far from my nose. "Keep your head down, you God damn fool!" Woolley growled. I did and he pulled me through.

Our route had been planned by Woolley, Cunningham

and myself. The Whangpu River was just about five miles due east. We would have to go across fields, avoiding Jap patrols that might be on the roads. It was my idea to aim for the Jap garrison on the river. If we could hit a spot, perhaps a hundred yards from there on the river bank, I was sure we could find a sampan. The rest would be relatively easy. If we could get ten miles down the Yangtse we'd be in free Chinese territory. We'd find friendly Chinese and be shunted forward by them until we reached the Chinese Army. Our plan looked good. There was only one alternative. That was to hit for the open country directly. But I knew that there were a lot of puppet troops in the open country behind Woosung. I had vetoed that plan.

"Are you sure, Master?" Liu had said gently. "I know we will find friends in the open country. I advise going that way instead of by the river."

"No, Liu," I said, "once we get a sampan we'll be all right."

Liu said nothing, content to obey my orders. Now we struck to the east. Liu, rather timidly, touched my arm and whispered, "Are you sure, Master? You don't want to go to the country instead of the river?" I shook my head. We'd stick to our plan. We walked in single file. I was first, Liu behind me. We'd do the talking, if we met anyone. We made good progress. We didn't hear any alarm; we didn't meet anyone. This was easy—too easy. And then, as we approached the river, we met the greatest enemy any seafaring man can ever meet. Fog! The fog seemed to be rolling toward us in sheets. It was so thick we could reach out and grab a handful of it. It got into our throats and we felt it on

our foreheads. We had no compass. We kept close together, saying nothing, stumbling along the faint trails, sinking knee deep in rice paddies. Within an hour we were completely lost, and the fog, instead of thinning out, blanketed us. They probably wouldn't discover our escape until daylight, and then they'd scour the whole neighborhood. We had to be down the river by then or we were lost. Beheading was the penalty for attempted escape.

And then we found the river. We found it by stumbling into it. We couldn't see it. We couldn't see five feet ahead of us. We heard voices to the left of us—voices talking in Japanese. Evidently we had hit closer to the Jap garrison than we had intended. We crouched there, by the river bank, hardly daring to breathe. Then we heard two Jap sentries talking on our right. We couldn't look for a sampan now. We couldn't move. I thought we'd better get away from the river bank. Apparently, it was well patroled. Slowly, quietly, we retraced our steps. We had gone only 100 yards when we bumped into a small abandoned outhouse. It had no door and we went in to hold a council of war. For the moment, we were beaten. If the fog lifted, we would try the river bank again, but in this fog we were much more apt to find a Jap patrol than a sampan. We decided to stay there for awhile. The fog kept swirling around us—a dirty, thick, yellow fog—and then what wind there had been died and now the fog settled even more heavily on the ground. An hour passed. Another hour. My watch said it would be dawn soon. Common sense dictated that we lie there during daylight. It was risky because they'd be searching everywhere, but we really had no alternative. As long as we were there

we might as well sleep. So we huddled together and pulled straw over us to ward off the chill and slept.

The morning dispelled the fog. It was a fine day—too fine. About nine in the morning, we heard shouts from the river bank. They were looking for us, all right. If they missed our hideout, though; and the night was clear, we might be able to get away. If we could only get into a sampan and go down the river on the ebb tide. That would carry us at six knots to Yangtse Cape and to comparative safety. And then we heard voices—Chinese voices. There were wide cracks in the sides of the outhouse and, peering out, I could see a group of Chinese soldiers. Maybe they'd pass us by, I thought. But they didn't. Evidently they had been given orders to search this particular territory and search it well. They surrounded the rickety shack.

Woolley gripped my arm. "And not a gun among us, God damn it!" he muttered.

"We're beaten, John," I whispered, and then the officer in charge of the Chinese puppets marched through the door. His revolver was in his hand and he trained it on us. He called his men. We stood up. We had nothing to fight with.

"I am sorry," the officer said, "but you are my prisoners."

We nodded mutely. We had built high hopes on this venture. Once through the wire, we thought the toughest part of the job was over. And now to be caught like this—without a chance of doing anything about it. We couldn't run. There were twelve soldiers, all with rifles.

"Come along," the officer said, and I read a message of sympathy in his eyes. It was obvious that he hated doing this, but he had no alternative. We walked in silence along

a rude trail that led to the village of Pao Shan. This was a quaint old walled town on the river bank. They put us in a pen, and the coolies came and looked at us as though they wanted to help us. But there was nothing they could do. Then the Japs arrived. They were very curt, but they didn't mistreat us. Evidently they had orders to deliver us somewhere, and in good condition. They told us to get into a truck and we were taken to the village of Woosung, the same village we had landed at in the *Nitta Maru* three months before. We were put into the gendarmerie jail. Our cell was more like a cave cut out of the concrete side of the building than a prison cell. They put us in with five others—one Japanese officer and four Chinese. We were told that Lieutenant Kawai of the Shanghai gendarmerie was on his way to question us. The Shanghai gendarmerie had about the same reputation as the German Gestapo. They were known to be very adroit at "questioning." We held a council of war and decided to tell the absolute truth. We had told no one of our escape and we could quite truthfully say that no one had helped us. We all knew that it would be very difficult to lie under torture, but it wouldn't be so difficult to stick to the truth. Besides, lying would serve no useful purpose at this point.

Our cellmates were a rare lot. The Chinese were thieves, but the Jap was a murderer. He had cut off the head of a fellow officer. He didn't tell us why. He, himself, was to be beheaded but it didn't seem to bother him. Guards came in and put leg irons on us. This was a filthy hole with only a bucket for sanitary conveniences. The floor was of mud. Finally, a coolie came to feed us. He had a pail filled with

rice. He scooped up a handful of the rice and, with his dirty hands, molded it into a ball, for all the world like a kid making a snowball. Then, squatting by the entrance, he rolled the ball of rice across the filthy floor to us. He rolled one ball for each of us. It was awful stuff, but we were in no mood to be squeamish. We ate it. I began to feel ticklish and I couldn't understand it until I saw Woolley scratching. The lice had lost no time leaping from our cellmates to our relatively healthy bodies. The cell was about nine by twelve, which didn't give us much room to stretch out, but we knew we'd need some sleep before the ordeal of the questioning, so we lay down. The busy lice made it difficult, but we finally dozed off. When I woke I found my head on the shoulder of the Jap murderer.

Again the coolie came with his pail of rice and again his hands, dirtier than ever, fashioned it into sodden balls and rolled them to us. Then guards came and put handcuffs on us. The four Chinese and the Jap looked at us with new respect. Only the most dangerous criminals were given both leg irons and handcuffs. Lieutenant Kawai was ready to question us. Now we were put into separate cells. He took us in turn. He questioned me for seven or eight hours continuously, but, to my amazement, I wasn't beaten or tortured. He was very gentle—disarmingly so. The Japanese method of questioning is one which I'll never understand. They have infinite patience and will repeat the same questions over and over again. Usually the questions are not at all pertinent to the subject at hand. It was an hour before he asked me about the escape and who helped us. First, he asked me about my father. What was his name? Where had

he gone to school? When had he graduated? How old was he when he died? What was my mother's maiden name? He asked a hundred such questions and then finally came around to the escape. Who had helped us? Finally, he left me to question the others. A dozen times he returned to me to say that Woolley, or one of the others, had admitted being helped by other prisoners. I laughed at him when he told me that. I knew he was giving them the same nonsense. Finally, he gave up. Perhaps he believed us. We were loaded onto a truck and brought back to Woosung War Prisoners Camp. It was disheartening to have to see the miserable place again. I had never really envisioned the possibility of failure. I was sure once we went under the wire that we'd get through. Perhaps if I'd taken Liu's advice we would have made it, but the Chinese boy never even looked at me reproachfully. I am sure that any American would have said, "I told you so."

The whole camp body was made to line up to watch us re-enact our escape. We had to crawl over the gravel and under the wire again. The Jap guards looked at us almost in awe. That charged wire frightened them badly. They thought that the electric current emanated from the wire and would kill anyone who even approached it. They shook their heads in amazement as we crawled under it again without being harmed. Poor little Colonel Yusei was almost beside himself. He made long speeches to us, hysterical tirades. He had lost considerable face by our escape, and he was, I am sure, close to madness. To make it worse his police dogs had failed him badly. Our escape had been discovered in the morning. Yusei had immediately brought

out five big police dogs to trail us. He had gathered articles of clothing we had left behind and had dropped them at the wire under which we had escaped. He had brought the whole camp out to watch the performance. The eager dogs sniffed our clothing and, lifting their noses, had bayed angrily. Yusei must have felt very good then. The dogs strained at their leashes. Yusei then made a short speech in which he told the prisoners that he was going to unleash the dogs and that they would follow us, find us, and tear us to bits. Then he gave the signal and the dogs were released. Instead of dashing under the wire in pursuit of us, the four dogs, with a single mind, turned around and ran hell bent for the open-air kitchen. They'd been sniffing that soup on the fire—not our socks. There was a shout of laughter from the men and Yusei had turned purple. One of the prisoners had sidled up close enough to tell me that. I repeated the story to the others and we all roared with laughter. Now Yusei gave us what he thought to be a horribly humiliating punishment. He put regular dog leashes around our necks and had his guards march us all around the camp. The men winked to us as we passed. One would call out, "Don't let the bastards get you down!" Another would call, "Better luck next time!" We didn't mind our "humiliation" at all. To a Jap such a march, held by a leash, would have meant a horrible loss of face from which he might never have recovered. To us it was just a laugh. Then we were loaded back into trucks and told that we were headed for Bridge House in Shanghai for questioning and trial. This sobered us considerably. Bridge House had been an old hotel on Szechuen Road and now it was used, we had heard, exclusively for

torture. The grapevine had already brought us many, many tales about the horrors of Bridge House. It seemed as though we were to find out how true those stories were.

I took a deep breath as I went through the big doors of Bridge House. I turned and looked at the warm sun and wondered whether or not I'd ever see it again. We were to be held here, they told us, for "investigation." That, of course, could mean anything. We were put into separate cells. The cell they shoved me into measured ten by twelve feet. There were thirteen to eighteen of us packed into it. There were Chinese, Russians, British and Americans. Among them were Sir Frederick Maze, head of the Chinese maritime customs; J. M. Mackay, of the National City Bank; Freddie Twogood, director of the Standard Oil Company. They glanced up apathetically when I entered. From their looks, most of them had been tortured. There was a pail for sanitary use—that was all. These men were as filthy as human beings could be. Some of them were more dead than alive. They were only given enough food to sustain life. We were given one bowl of congee and four slices of bread each morning and some tea in the afternoon. During the day we had to sit cross-legged on the floor without any support for the back. We couldn't lean against the moisture-laden walls. Sit cross-legged for ten minutes and your back will begin to ache. We had to sit that way all day. Guards looked in and counted us many times a day. Any man who was caught standing or walking was beaten. Most of the men there actually had no idea why they had been imprisoned. Some, of course, were criminals. The man who became my best friend in the cell was a Chinese murderer. His

business was murder, just as another's might be tea or banking. He was a well-set-up man, about thirty. He had the body of a wrestler or fighter and a keen, quick mind. His name was Wang Lee. He and I would sit there, cross-legged, just whispering by the hour. He told me of his many murders. He had no idea how many he had committed. He was a knife man and he had nothing but contempt for a man who used an axe or a gun.

"You can slip a knife easily between the ribs of a man," he told me in all seriousness, "and know that he will die immediately. It is a wonderful feeling when you know you have picked the right spot. It is a quick, clean way to kill anyone and that is why I was so highly paid. My employers knew that I would never fail, nor would the killing be traced back to them."

"Who employed you, Lee?" I asked.

"Anyone," he laughed, "who wanted someone out of the way. I am sure," he added slyly, "that you have met more than one of my employers at your clubs in Shanghai, or at the Palace Hotel Bar. But understand, I never killed because I liked killing, or because I disliked the men I killed. It was a business with me. I only killed three times because I felt like killing. I received no pay for those killings."

"Who were those victims?"

"Three Japanese," he spit out. "These fools here who question me do not suspect me of that, though. They think I am concealing information."

At first I thought that Lee was doing a bit of romanticizing, but I found out from others that he was exactly what he claimed to be. Lee had been beaten and tortured, but it

hadn't broken his spirit. One day the guards came into our cell and made us line up. They did this periodically for absolutely no reason at all. They made Wang Lee step forward. One of the guards was a big man—big for a Jap—and he had powerful shoulders. He drew back his fist and let it go at Lee's chin. Lee went down as though he'd been hit with a sledge. But he got right up and stood there, grinning a little, with a faint trickle of blood spilling down his chin. The guard knocked him down again, and again he arose. Once more and still again, and each time Wang Lee, still grinning, regained his feet. His face was a bloody mass now. The Jap guard was furious because he couldn't put over the knock-out blow. Again his fist thudded against Lee's jaw. Lee lay there inert, and the guard smiled. But Lee stirred and rose again. He was shaky but he was on his feet and grinning through the blood. Thirteen times in all Lee was knocked down. He got to his feet twelve times. He couldn't make it the thirteenth time. He was completely out. The guards turned around and left the cell. There wasn't much we could do for Lee. We had no water to throw over his bleeding face. We had no drugs or bandages. He was out for some five hours and then, grinning as always, he was himself again. He laughed when we proffered our sympathy.

"I could have done better than that," he boasted. "Thirteen punches and he couldn't knock me out. He lost face badly. He will be a laughing stock among his men."

Wang Lee was a murderer, but he was a courageous one. He was also amazingly gentle. One of our cellmates was a middle-aged man who was too weak to sit cross-legged. The guards never bothered him, either. He just lay close to the

wall all day and all night moaning a little, but that was all. I slept next to him the first two nights. We huddled close for warmth because each of us had only one thin blanket and the March weather was cold. One morning I woke to find him sitting up. He was busily engaged in picking large pieces of flesh from his feet—chunks two inches long. He took the flesh and pressed it against the moist wall and it stuck there. I noticed that there were dark marks all over the wall. Evidently he'd been doing this for a long time. I looked at his foot. There was very little flesh left on it and what was left he was plucking off. Then I looked at his face quickly. There was no expression of pain on it. Then, of course, I realized that he was a leper.

He was Wang Lee's special charge. Lee would put his blanket over him at night and would talk soothingly to him. If leprosy were contagious all of us would have caught it from the sick man because we lived very close to him for thirty days.

The cell was alive with lice and other vermin. I had been in very good health when I was arrested on December 8th, but now I was losing weight fast. I had weighed 190 then. I figured I was down to 160 now, but that was tempting enough for the lice and the other seen and unseen bugs who never seemed to sleep. Each morning we were allowed out into the courtyard to wash. We took turns under a cold tap. It wasn't much of a wash because the guards hurried us. We were only allowed two minutes in all but it was a wonderful two minutes to look forward to. Occasionally the sun managed to penetrate the depth of the courtyard. Somehow the sun was a reminder never to stop hoping. I know I always

felt better when I saw the sun. Sometimes I'd meet Woolley or Cunningham or Liu in the yard. Woolley was still the tough, British naval officer roaring at the guards in his deep voice.

I conceived the idea of asking the guards if a group of us couldn't occasionally clean out the courtyard. It was a filthy place. Permission was granted and they allowed Woolley to help. The exercise, and especially the fresh air, did us a lot of good. The stench of our cells, of course, was indescribable. It was so bad that the decaying odor of the dying leper was hardly noticeable. Every day men would be taken from the cell for "questioning." They would be brought back, sometimes hours later, broken in body, sometimes gibbering insanely, their reason completely gone. More often than not their arms would be out of their sockets. Part of the Jap torture was to string men up by their arms. Twice Chinese had been given the water cure and had been thrown back into our cell. In each case the man was dead. Several times, on my way back to my cell from the courtyard, I saw the water cure being given. The Japs never closed the doors of the offices where they did the questioning and often I'd stop and look. The guard with me never objected. He wanted to see the fun.

To begin with, all prisoners were stripped naked before questioning. The Japs believed that this gave them a great psychological advantage. When a man refused to answer questions (which was very, very rare) or if they weren't satisfied with his answers (which was routine), they would place him on a desk top, face up. They would roll up a bath towel into the form of a cone and place it firmly around his

mouth and nose. Meanwhile they'd be filling a five-gallon can with water. They would add kerosene and urine to the water. They would pour this through the opening at the top of the cone and the victim had to either swallow the vile concoction or strangle. His belly would swell and then the guards would strike him sharply across the stomach with a light steel rod. Usually the man would lose consciousness. They had a sort of hoist and tackle in the rooms they used for giving the water cure. They would hoist the man up by his heels and allow the water to drain out of him. As soon as he recovered consciousness they would repeat the dose. Sometimes they would hit the victim too hard with the steel rods and the stomach would burst.

When they finally got around to question me I felt sure I was in for the water cure. However, my inquisitor was the same Lieutenant Kawai who had questioned us at the Woosung Prison. Apparently he felt that we were telling the truth because he never tortured me. Kawai was the head man at Bridge House and although I never saw him do any actual torturing himself, I am convinced that it was done on his orders. I had to strip off my prison clothes and walk into Kawai's office stark naked. To me this was rather a childish performance. I might have looked ridiculous, but I didn't feel ridiculous, and the whole Jap idea was to make you feel ridiculous and inferior.

"You can't torture me, you know, Lieutenant Kawai," I said, smiling. "To begin with, it won't do any good because I have told you the truth. And, in addition, I won't allow it."

He looked at me, puzzled. I knew Japs pretty well. You

can't get real tough with them or they'll give you the only answer they know—the bayonet. But you can kid them along. Left-jab them off-balance by saying things they don't expect. Get them thinking off their ordinary, preconceived tracks and you bewilder them; when they're bewildered, you've got them. That's how I worked on Kawai. The guards made me kneel in front of the desk. That is the routine position you assume for questioning. You kneel on a metal plate with your hands at your sides. If you lean more than a few inches forward you lose your balance and instinctively throw your hands out in front of you to save you from falling. That is a signal for the guards to beat you. I knelt there, smiling at Kawai, shaking my head a little, as though to say, "Isn't this childish?" I had spent so many years on the decks of rolling freighters that keeping my balance was no trick to me, though my knees, of course, were screaming blue murder. Just kneel on your carpeted floor for five minutes with your hands at your sides and you'll see what I mean.

A guard stood on either side of me, smoking, and I looked at their cigarettes and laughed. While a man was being questioned his inquisitors and guards usually smoked. When they finished a cigarette they would put it out on the man's naked body. They would press the burning tip of the cigarette into his body slowly until the glow went out. I have met and talked to forty-five prisoners who had to endure that. They averaged 200 to 400 burns each. The Japs never considered it torture, and were amazed when I told them I thought it a pretty awful thing to do. They protested that the cigarette business was routine; a part of the questioning but definitely

not torture. I agreed with them up to a point. The burns never killed anyone, they insisted, and to them torture was punishment that ended or could conceivably end in death. When I reminded them that usually the man being questioned was burned in the testicles, often so badly that he lost his capacity for fatherhood, they grew thoughtful.

"I don't want these guards to put their cigarettes out on me," I told Kawai very sternly. "I am a naval officer. Keep your childish torture for peasants. I mean that, Lieutenant Kawai. I won't stand for it."

Kawai actually looked embarrassed. "We intended nothing like that, Commander," he said sheepishly, like a kid caught in a lie. "I just wanted to ask you some questions."

He asked me a thousand questions, the same questions he had asked me at Woosung. It was easy to answer them. The best of having told the truth once is that you never have to remember what you said. If you tell lies then you have to remember the lies you told. I would have cheerfully lied to Kawai, or to any other Jap officer, and lied on a stack of Bibles, but all the time I was in prison I never found it useful to lie. Once you start lying to Japs you are dealing in a commodity they recognize and know well, and they are better at it than you are. Lying is part of their tactics, as essential as gunnery, or mine laying, or navigation to them. Kawai kept questioning me—silly questions about my mother and father, and finally about the escape, as he had done before.

He asked me again and again, "Who helped you escape?" Again and again I repeated, "No one." Finally, Kawai became exasperated. He called shrilly, "You're a liar!" Instinc-

tively, I leaped up and tried to get at him across the desk. The two guards grabbed me, and Kawai, badly rattled, slid from behind the desk and went out of the room. I kept yelling every Japanese curse I knew at him. The guards just yelled at me. They seemed bewildered. In a few minutes Kawai returned and apologized for calling me a liar. Why he didn't have me bayoneted, or at least tortured, I don't know. But you can't figure out the mental processes of a Jap. Sometimes you think you have them blue-printed and then one of them will do something that completely upsets your estimate. I was in Bridge House thirty days and was never hit once.

One day two guards came into my cell and ordered me to extend my hands. They wanted to handcuff me. I said, "Why do you want to handcuff me?" The guard answered, "Because we are going to punish you." I shook my head and laughed. "No, you can't do that. I won't stand for it." The two guards stared in bewilderment, shrugged their shoulders, and left the cell.

Few of the other prisoners were as lucky. Nearly all of them were tortured. Sergeant Yamamoto, Private Kato, and an English-speaking Jap whom we only knew as No. 56, were the most sadistic of the torturers. I'll never forget those three men, nor will any of us who were at Bridge House. I'd like to meet them again some day and have John Woolley with me. That would be very pleasant. No. 56 was an interpreter who liked to take an active part in torture. He was very careful to conceal his name from us. He had lived in America—had, in fact, been graduated from Notre Dame. He had married a Japanese woman who was an American

citizen. Their two daughters attended the University of Southern California. No. 56 was the cruelest, most vicious man I ever met. If he encountered prisoners walking through the halls, he would lash out with his heavily shod feet, kick them, scream invective at them. I finally learned his name, but I'm keeping that to myself. I fervently hope that he will be spared until after the war.

Now and then we would run across a decent guard. There were two of them in Bridge House—both interpreters. I have heard them protest angrily when other Japs were torturing prisoners. They couldn't do much because the officers left the question of punishment pretty much up to the guards. Their only orders were, "Inflict punishment when necessary." That gave the more sadistically minded guards a great deal of leeway. I have seen those two interpreters take really grave risks in an effort to save men from torture. I have their names, but it would do them very little good to be known.

In addition to the water cure and ordinary beatings, the Japs used what they called the electrical treatment. They would apply to especially vital and tender parts of the body electrically charged rods. When we heard screams, which we did every day and every night, we knew someone was getting the electrical treatment. I have seen this torture many times. It must have been very painful because the victims nearly always screamed. They usually screamed too when they were strung up and their own weight wrenched the arms out of their sockets. They never screamed while getting the water cure, though. They couldn't.

The torture was nearly always a senseless thing, given for no good reason at all. One question was invariably asked

of prisoners. "Are you involved in underground activities to aid the enemy or to do harm to Japan?" If the prisoner answered, "No," they would torture him to make him confess. If, under stress of torture, he would confess, then he would be tortured again as punishment. Women, of course, fared much worse than men did. One middle-aged woman, a British subject, was put into a cell with twenty-five men of all races. She was the only woman in the cell. The toilet facilities consisted of a small wooden tub, placed at the cell entrance. There was no screen around it. She had to use that in full view of the other cell occupants. In the cell next to mine there was a rather young and attractive Russian woman, who was seven months pregnant. She, too, had to undergo the same indignities. One day the guards found a small piece of paper in her cell covered with writing. Greatly incensed, they made all of the occupants of the cell, including the Russian woman, strip naked. They made them leave their clothes in the cell and then they marched them naked into the courtyard, while they searched the clothing. They had to stand there in the bitter cold for thirty minutes, while the guards made lewd jests about the Russian woman, who stood there stoically, her head held proudly. One day she disappeared. I never learned what happened to her. Perhaps she was lucky enough to have died.

I have the names of thirty Americans and British I saw tortured while in Bridge House. They may still be alive, so I refrain from naming them. But after the war those who are still living will make excellent witnesses against those who operated Bridge House.

On April 13th, Woolley, Cunningham, Teters, Liu and I

were taken from our cells and put into a truck. We were being transferred, they told us, to the Kiangwan Prison. We brightened at this news, remembering our decent treatment under the Jap naval officers at Kiangwan, but our hopes were dashed when they added that this was not the naval prison but the Japanese Army prison in Kiangwan village. We were going there to be tried.

"Tried for what?" we asked.

"For deserting from the Japanese Army," we were told, in all seriousness.

«« CHAPTER FOUR »»

WE WERE put into solitary confinement at Kiangwan. The cell walls were of concrete and the floors were of wood. The cells were four feet by nine. In the center of the floor there was a trapdoor and under it a bucket for toilet facilities. It was seldom emptied. The door was of heavy wood and in the center there was a peephole three-eighths of an inch by eight inches. There was no window. This was the only ventilation the cells had. Our food was Japanese Army rations —not too bad, but we were given only three small bowls of tea a day. We had no other liquids. A 100-watt electric-light bulb hung overhead and it burned day and night.

Then came our trial. We had a defense counsel who knew no English. When we complained, we were given an "interpreter," but he knew no English either. The judge was a brigadier general who had a great sense of his own importance. The prosecutor introduced the shovel as evidence; he introduced pictures of the wire under which we had crawled. As we had already cheerfully admitted the escape and told of it in every detail, this seemed rather a waste of time. Our trial lasted eight hours, during which we had to stand at attention. We had been stripped before going into the courtroom and our naked bodies had been searched. The Japs were always looking for written messages and they

overlooked no place where such a message might be concealed. Then we were allowed to put on our uniforms for the trial.

It was amusing to hear the conversations between the defense counsel and the judge. They didn't realize, of course, that I understood Japanese. "I think we should give them the limit," our defense lawyer said to the judge. "Why not execute them?"

"I agree with you," the judge answered, frowning, "but Tokyo is getting soft."

This made me believe that our sentences had already been fixed by some authority higher than the one-star judge. They asked us a thousand questions, repetitions of previous questioning. Finally, the ridiculous farce was over; our clothes were returned and we were taken to our cells. It was fifty-three days before we were told our sentences: "Ten years of penal servitude, the reason for the light sentence being that you are poor, ignorant foreigners who didn't know any better."

But we had to wait fifty-three days to hear that. Fifty-three days in solitary can easily drive a man mad. We were ordered to kneel facing the wall of our cells. We had to remain in that position all day except at meal times. Every fifteen minutes a guard looked through the peephole to be sure we maintained our positions. Each morning we were allowed five minutes for a wash in the courtyard. However, the five minutes began when our doors were unlocked and we had to be back in our cells within five minutes. Actually, we were seldom in the courtyard more than two minutes. Twice a week we were given twenty minutes in the court-

yard to exercise. We weren't beaten, nor were we starved—our great enemy was the constant loneliness.

As in life itself, petty annoyances stood out far beyond their true worth. For instance, during our many days of solitary our fingernails kept growing normally. Here we had no way to trim them, save by wearing them down against the concrete wall which we faced. Even this was frowned upon by the guards, and caused several arguments. Try it some time and you'll find that you can do nothing with the corners, which become centers of irritation. A small detail? Yes, but important at times like these. Another annoying detail lay in tracking to their lair the wily fleas. When one no longer is allowed to wear glasses and vision is getting even worse due to lack of vitamins, this can be an ordeal.

Solitary confinement affects men differently. Some men drop into a sort of torpor, a mental lethargy; the loneliness acts as a numbing soporific that dulls the brain and kills the spirit. Luckily, I wasn't that type. Neither was Woolley. Woolley had always been interested in mathematics. Sometimes during our exercise periods we had a chance to exchange a few words. He told me that he was mentally working out every problem in geometry that he had ever studied. One day he told me jubilantly that he was well on his way to squaring the circle. Solitary isn't nearly as bad on the body as it is on the mind. If you have always led an active life, as I have, you couldn't just shut off your thinking apparatus. Being there alone, week after week, seemed to stimulate my imagination. I would kneel by the hour, composing plays, writing novels. I must have written three plays and half a dozen novels in my mind. Then, when that game palled, I

would remember books I had read and I'd go right through them from the beginning. I reread *War and Peace* kneeling in my cell—read it from memory.

Prince Vassily walked into my cell and I heard General Kutuzov explaining his strategy at Borodino. I followed the retreat of the French again down the road to Smolensk, suffered with Prince Andrey and sympathized with Pierre and Natasha. I had read *War and Peace* as a youngster but it meant much more to me now than it had then. Now I could think of the intense suffering so many of the characters had undergone and I'd identify myself with them and say, "Their sufferings were so much greater than yours. They survived. So shall you."

I looked back to particularly tough times I had been through and I remembered that in retrospect they didn't seem so tough at all. Some day I'd look back on this experience and realize that it hadn't been so horrible. The thing to do was to realize that now, instead of waiting perhaps for years to recognize it. I found cheering things about my situation. There were no lice in my cell any more—the fleas must have killed them all. My two blankets were infested with fleas, but I managed to kill thousands of them. I would hold the blankets close to the walls. The fleas, attracted perhaps by the moisture or startled by their vertical position, would jump from the blanket to the irregular concrete and, once in the open, I'd squash them to death.

But chiefly the resources to fight "stir happiness" had to come from within. There was poetry, for instance. As a kid at school, I had memorized "Bingen on the Rhine." The first line went, "A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers. . . ."

It took me a week of concentration before the next lines came to me. They were, "There was lack of women's nursing, There was dearth of women's tears. . . ." When I finally remembered those lines I felt as though I'd scored a great victory over the Japs.

When I exhausted the possibilities of books I had read, or things I had learned, there was something else to sustain me —the memories of a full life. I thought of my wife, Rita, safely back in the States. I thought of the various ships I had commanded, and then one day I began to write the story of my life. The sickening odor of the cell disappeared, and I imagined that I could smell the scent of the peach and apple blossoms I always associated with the place where I was born. The walls of the cells receded and I was a kid again. . . .

I was christened Columbus Darwin Smith because there had always been a Columbus Darwin in the family. It had started some few hundred years before and, unfortunately, the habit had persisted. I managed to keep the Darwin part of it fairly well hidden, so it was just as Columbus Smith I was known at school, and in Atlanta, Georgia, where I was raised. We lived on the outskirts of the city. It was a good place for a kid to be raised. I had my first gun when I was six. At the age of seven I was shooting rabbits and quail and squirrels and hoping that life would never change. But there was a thing called school that had to be endured and that was very tough on me. Besides the Columbus Darwin tradition, there was always a doctor in the family, and my father (a doctor, of course) hoped that I'd follow in his foot-

steps and the footsteps of his father and his father, etc. But I had no taste for school. My brother Linton became the doctor, and a very good doctor, too.

I followed the bent of the man for whom some Smith had first been named generations before—Columbus. Or maybe I was a throwback to a fantastic great-uncle of mine, the fabled Soapy Smith. He ruled Denver in the middle of the last century and someone wrote a book about him which was undoubtedly well named—*Monarch of Misrule*. He had made fortunes in Alaska, where he went hunting for gold, and he made additional fortunes gambling in Reno and Denver. Soapy Smith came to a logical end—a bullet closed his colorful career. I had lapped up every story I could find or could get my father to tell me about Soapy Smith. Maybe some of his blood had trickled down into my veins.

I hated school but I loved reading and, above all, I loved reading stories of the sea. When I was sixteen I summoned up my courage and announced to my parents that I wanted to go to sea. In keeping with the family tradition, they should have told me to forget about such nonsense. They should have given me stern lectures and sent me back to school. Instead, with an understanding and sympathy seldom encountered in parents, they said that if I'd made my mind up, well, they'd help all they could. So at sixteen I was off to Tampa, Florida, with my parents' blessings and money in my pocket.

Back in 1906 you didn't need any papers to go to sea, not even a passport. You didn't need any union card. You didn't even need experience. Ships sailing out of Tampa and other gulf ports were virtually all sailing vessels. I found it easy

to get a job as a seaman. I loved the life from the start. I had hated arithmetic at school, but navigation was something else. I was intrigued by the thought that the sun, eighty-three million miles away and the stars even farther away, could tell a man on the deck of a ship just where he was. That is, if the man on the ship knew the language. I studied navigation and even bought a wooden hambone (sextant) in a pawn shop. I studied charts and tables and spherical trigonometry and, because I had the chance to apply this knowledge, it wasn't irksome studying; it was exciting.

A seaman's life was not a good life in those days. There were government regulations but no one paid any attention to them. To become a mate you had to take an examination, but again no one paid much attention to that. If a ship owner liked your work and wanted to make you a mate he'd get you a ticket. No nonsense about examinations. Very few Americans followed the sea then. Those who did were kids like myself with romantic notions about the life, or men with no ambition who thought it the easiest way to earn a living. The shipping companies offered few inducements which would attract the hard-working, decent man. There was, for instance, no such thing as steady employment or standard wages. You might make a trip and then be on the beach for three or four months before you could sign on again. Food and living conditions were for the most part foul, and you couldn't complain. This wasn't true of all companies, of course, but it was the general rule. It wasn't until the men organized and the owners finally realized that they had strong unions to cope with that conditions improved.

The British were far, far ahead of us in shipping then. They had men on permanent payrolls and they gave their men pensions and in general they treated their enterprises as legitimate business not as get-rich-quick schemes. You'd meet a man off a Blue Funnel Line ship, for instance, who had worked nineteen years for the Liverpool company which owned the line. He'd be a steady, capable worker with a home of his own and he'd be looking forward to his pension. You very seldom met a man off an American ship who made more than a few voyages with the same line. When it came to sailing vessels, conditions were even worse. Usually a man would own one, two or three sailing ships, and he would be the complete master of ships and men. He'd hire and fire at will; he'd decide what food and wages and quarters the men were to have. If he happened to be a good man (and many were) conditions would be good. But that was the exception. Our main complaint on ships sailing out of Tampa or Galveston or Key West was the uncertainty of employment. Now, strangely enough, although I was only a kid I had a great deal more education than most of my shipmates. Then, too, I honestly loved the life and had decided to make the sea my career. I studied a great deal and it wasn't long before skippers realized that I could be trusted to stand a watch and keep an eye on the weather to an extent that they couldn't trust more experienced sailors. I had a kid's respect for authority, and the skippers liked that. Nevertheless, I often went months between ships.

I spent most of the time at Cortez, a small town about fifty miles from Tampa. For years I made this my home between voyages. Lying there in my cell in Kiangwan, I'd

chuckle at things that had happened to me in Cortez. I'd look inward and the greenish walls, rotten with fungus and moisture, vanished, and I'd be in my clean little shack on the waterfront again. I loved to fish and, if you loved fishing, you could always make a living in Cortez. Mullet, pompano, weakfish, Spanish mackerel, kingfish—the gulf and bays were filled with them, all just asking to be caught. I hired myself out to various boat owners and learned the tricks of the trade. Finally, I bought a fishing boat. My brother Linton, generous as always, provided me with the money. With a crew of five, we did all right. I rented a shack right at the end of the pier where I tied up, and I fixed it up real shipshape.

Although I liked fishing well enough, it was really just a business with me. I enjoyed hunting a great deal more, and I spent most of my spare time hunting snakes and alligators in the marsh land back of Cortez. I developed a rather surprising knack of catching snakes. After skinning them I'd sell the cured hides for belts and hatbands. The rattlesnake skins sold for the highest price (about $1.25 each), so I became a specialist in rattlesnakes. Raymond Ditmars, curator of the Bronx Park Zoo, had just published a book on snakes and I studied it carefully. I wanted to see if a snake could be tamed. All the natives around Cortez said it was impossible. I rather thought so, too, but figured it worth trying.

One day we were out net fishing in Sarasota Bay. We were a mile or so from land when I was amazed to see a snake swimming on the surface of the water. I fished him out with an oar and found him to be a rattler about six feet long. I let him strike the oar and deposit his poison on it. Then I put him in a bag and brought him home. There

was really no precedent for taming a snake. I just tried a hit-or-miss system. I knew that snakes liked the sun. I would open the door of my shack and put a board across the doorway, so the rattler couldn't get out. The sun would pour in and I'd take my snake out of his box and drop him in the sunlight. He would blink a few times and then coil up and doze off. I went off on fishing trips and left the snake at home. He had the run of my shack. When I returned I was careful not to step on him or make any sudden noises. Within a couple of weeks he seemed to accept this existence as normal. When I went to bed I always put him in his wooden box from which he couldn't escape.

My evenings I devoted to reading everything from O. Henry's stories to *War and Peace*. I'd sit in a chair and read and the snake would coil up a couple of feet away and lie there, like any household pet. I'd move across the room and sit on my bed and, after a few minutes, the rattler would follow me. No matter where I went in the shack he would slither over and settle close to me. This was all pretty exciting for a kid of seventeen or so. My snake was actually becoming a pet. Unconsciously I had adopted the right methods of training him. I never made loud or sudden noises. I never stepped on him or moved quickly in the shack. But there was no way of getting him to eat. Everyone there in the snake country believed that a rattler never struck until he gave warning, but he never rattled at me. The fishermen who used the pier and occasionally dropped into my shack were scared stiff of him. That was all right with me because it kept them away and I had more time to read. One night, about a month after I acquired my pet, Ben Jones,

a big, red-headed fisherman, forgot about the snake. He came up the pier and I heard his heavy boots on the loose planks. He flung open the door, took one step inside and stopped. My rattler, which had been peacefully curled on the floor, raised his head and began to rattle angrily. Ben leaped back. I had no real lock on my door, just a bent nail that could be hooked into a staple attached to the wall. Ben's coat caught on the nail and there was a loud, ripping sound. He yelled at me from outside. His fear of the snake had turned to anger against me because of the rip in his new coat. The snake, meanwhile, after a few more low rattles, had recoiled and was now slumbering again in the light from my lamp.

That snake lived with me for three months and he never displayed a single vicious tendency. When I stayed home afternoons I'd take him outside with me. It may sound ridiculous to say that he followed me just as a pet dog would follow his master, but there are any number of fishermen still living in Cortez who'll attest to the truth of it. The kids from town, of course, all had heard about my pet and they'd come and sit outside the shack asking to see the snake. Sometimes I'd be outside mending my nets while the snake dozed in the sun, and the kids, becoming bold, would walk up close to him. The boldest would sometimes take a stick and nudge him. Instead of turning on them, he just seemed a little hurt because the kids had annoyed him. Sometimes he'd go off on excursions when I'd take him out of the shack. I'd be fixing the nets and suddenly miss him. I'd whistle a few times and sure enough he would come slithering along easily.

My pet came to an unfortunate end through absolutely no fault of his own. A Holy Roller preacher came to town to hold a revival meeting. He was a persuasive talker and, within a few days, had half the town hanging on his words. Ordinarily sane, sensible people went into tantrums and trances under his spell. He promised them all kinds of immortality and immunity if they accepted the word of God as interpreted by him. He assured them that if their faith was strong enough poisonous insects or snakes could bite them without effect. In their hysteria they believed him and when his assistants took up collections the baskets were filled. Some of the fishermen whose wives now swore by this golden-tongued messiah were pretty fed up. One night when I was away, Clyde Fulford, one of my fisherman pals, went to my shack and collected the rattler. He put him into a box and, with a few others, went to the revival meeting. When the preacher bared his arm and told his enraptured audience that no venomous beast could hurt him, Clyde arose, walked to the front of the hall carrying the box, and said, "What about this rattler? Would you dare to handle it?"

The preacher apparently believed his own arguments. Without hesitation he plunged his hand into the box and pulled forth my snake. Now, there is only one way to handle a snake—grab him by the neck, just behind the head. If you hold him there he is helpless. His tail may thrash about, but he can't turn his head to strike you. The preacher, unfortunately, grabbed him in the middle and held him out like a rope, with both ends dangling. One end of my snake refused to dangle—the end with the fangs. No one heard him rattle because the crowd was now applauding their prophet

with loud hallelujahs. The snake struck the preacher's unprotected arm. Two hours later he was dead. I never knew what happened to the snake.

I still insist that I trained that snake to domesticity. But even the best-trained, most docile dog will snap under certain circumstances, and I don't blame the snake at all for losing his temper that night. He was undoubtedly bewildered, angry, and because of the way he was handled, in pain. The reaction to bewilderment, anger and pain is apt to be disastrous whether the victim is a snake, a dog, or a human being.

Later on I trained other snakes, but never made a real pet of any of them. I kept one huge non-poisonous gopher snake with me for a couple of months but when I left on a voyage I had to get rid of him. His skin was beautiful. It had a dark-purple iridescent sheen and when the sun shone on him his skin sparkled. We had all kinds of snakes in the country out beyond Cortez. In addition to rattlers and gophers there were a great many cottonmouth moccasins. They were real killers. It was commonly believed that they lay in wait for men to strike them. We often organized hunting parties to get alligators and cottonmouths. One day we heard that there was a huge bull alligator over near Bradentown. Five of us got into a big Cadillac belonging to Sam and Ben Murphy, who owned the biggest hardware store in Bradentown. We searched for that alligator but couldn't locate him.

"I hear you're a pretty good man with snakes," Sam said to me. "I'll bet you can't catch a live cottonmouth."

"Don't bet me, Sam," I said in all sincerity, "you'd lose. I could catch twenty cottonmouths out here in an hour."

Sam and the others hooted, but we made a few bets. The country around was infested with cottonmouths. There was a nice breeze blowing, which made it easier for me. I set a row of fires to the windward side of a marshy hummock. There were a lot of dried leaves and grass and the fires threw up a heavy smoke. I waited on the leeward side with a bag and a forked stick. They were smoked out so fast, within half an hour I had caught ten of them. There was no other place to park them but the back of the car. In an hour I had caught twenty-one. Cottonmouths are sure death if they hit you, but they're sluggish and easy to handle. The boys paid off, and we decided to take the snakes back home with us. After a few drinks it seemed a sensible idea. We drove through Bradentown. Three of us sat in the front of the Cadillac and the other two stood on the running board. The back seat was full of snakes. We stopped in the middle of Bradentown and someone, I don't remember who, said, "Why don't we let them out? Let's give the folks a thrill."

Not stopping to think of the consequences of our little lark, we opened the back doors and the snakes slithered down to the running board and then glided out into the street. It was a warm afternoon and when the snakes hit that sun-baked pavement they just began to purr with happiness. They settled themselves comfortably right across Bradentown's busiest thoroughfare. Bradentown was always a big tourist town and this winter it was packed. Startled screams went up from a hundred frightened women as they emerged from their shopping. People rushed out from stores to see what was going on. In a few minutes we had all the elements of a good-sized riot. One woman had hysterics and

her screams even scared us. Then up panted big fat Chief of Police Jim Young.

"You're under arrest!" he roared at me. The Chief knew I was a snake catcher and he figured that these were mine.

"Pick up those snakes!" he yelled.

"Not me, Chief, I'm under arrest," I told him. "Pick up your own snakes."

"I'll take you to jail!" he bellowed.

"Come on then, Chief, I'm ready."

"You'll get thirty days in jail for this!" His face was beet-red now and I thought he was going to blow up.

"Let's get going, Chief," I said.

He threatened me, he cajoled, he coaxed and almost wept. If I'd get rid of the snakes he'd have the sentence cut to fifteen days—to ten days—to five days. If I'd get rid of the snakes he'd forget the whole thing. So I got my stick and my bag and in a few minutes had all twenty-one snakes back in the car. We hustled out of town and stopped outside to kill them.

But it was only between sea trips that I played with snakes and went fishing. Finally I was given command of a schooner, and I was about the proudest twenty-year-old kid in the world. The ship was the *Heron*, out of Gulfport, a tidy two-master that would lift about 400 tons. I got to know the West Indies and Central America and Cuba and Jamaica. When I felt the deck of my own ship under me I knew that this was my life forever—the sea. Very often my crew of six had had much more experience at sea than I, but you never knew what kind of a crew you'd get in those days. Quite often I wound up with a crew of cowboys. Mrs. Potter

Palmer of Chicago owned a big ranch back of Sarasota. When things were slack at the ranch the cowhands made for the schooners. It was, except in heavy weather, an easy life with no responsibility and a chance to see at least part of the world. And there was plenty of time to stretch out on deck and sleep. But they were damn good sailors.

On those small schooners life was very informal. The captain wore no uniform nor did he command much respect. I might be squinting at the weather when one of the crew would squirt a stream of tobacco juice overboard and say to me, "Smitty, you better let her come up a little." More often than not he'd be right. But I was learning my trade the only way a sailing man can learn his trade—by sailing. And as skipper I was earning $60 a month. Sometimes things were tough. Once a hurricane dismasted me and I had to rig a jury sail and limp into Key West. That was my second trip as skipper. But it wasn't long before such incidents became more or less routine. In those days prices on the freight we carried fluctuated and often it was up to the skipper to make the best bargain he could. My owner was Captain Collier, and he was a good man to work for. I made one very profitable trip for him once, carrying a shipload of watermelons to Key West. This was before the railroad had been extended to Key West. Because of the coral construction of the Key, there was no water supply other than rainfall. There had been a long dry spell and Key West was thirsty. My juicy watermelons looked very good to the parched citizens of the Key and I sold them for a dollar each. They had cost about a cent each. That wasn't a bad profit. In

1917 I came back to Tampa from a long trip and the first thing I heard was that we were at war.

"We got to fight those damned Yankees again?" I asked incredulously. I learned that we were at war with some European country called Germany. All I knew about Germany was that back at school the map in the geography book showed Germany in green. But the Navy needed men, so I enlisted. They made me a chief petty officer and sent me to a place called Clayton, New York, to take over a sub-chaser. I got as far as New York City, all right. At Grand Central Station I asked for a ticket to Clayton and the man behind the counter said, "You'll have to change at Philadelphia, Mister."

"Oh, no, I don't," I said, real mad. "I may be a hick to you New Yorkers, but I happen to know that Philadelphia is in Pennsylvania, and I'm heading for a town in New York State."

"This Philadelphia ain't in Pennsylvania, Mister," he said mildly. "This is a place called Philadelphia, New York, and it's way up north not far from Clayton."

Clayton is in the Thousand Islands, as lovely a spot as I've ever seen. I joined a sub-chaser there, one of those amazing 110-footers designed by Fred Herreshof. It was bewildering at first because all of my experience had been with sails, and here I was handling a ship run by three gasoline engines, 200 horsepower each. A month later I was commissioned as ensign and was given command of one of the chasers. I fell in love with those craft. Despite their size, our Navy never lost one through stress of weather. They could go through anything—and did. In the winter of 1918

I found myself in the Mediterranean, a pleasant enough place, not unlike my familiar Florida waters. There were the same white beaches meeting the same deep-blue sea. I never did get to like the Mediterranean fish, though. There's nothing in that sea to compare with mullet or king-fish or pompano. I suppose the water is so warm that the fish there just get lazy, lie around and get fat. Their flesh is soft, flabby and pretty tasteless. In the Mediterranean our group of sub-chasers took part in the only naval engagement fought by units of the United States fleet during the whole war. This was off Durazzo, a seaport in Albania. Our part in the engagement was slight. The British and Italian cruisers did the shelling, and we witnessed a sight we thought would never again be equaled. A force of 125 Allied bombers, carrying huge fifty-pound bombs, flew over us to attack the Austrians. It was a great experience because we had never before seen planes drop bombs. That, incidentally, so far as I know, was the biggest bombing raid of the war. Whether the bombs ever hit anything but the ground I doubt very much. There were no bombsights then.

After the Armistice we volunteers were sent to Archangel. Our notions as to what we were expected to do there were very hazy. As we understood it, two factions of Russians were fighting for control of the government—the Whites versus the Reds. For some strange reason we had to interfere with this inter-family quarrel. To this day I don't know what business it was of ours. At any rate, I was transferred to the *U.S.S. Des Moines* (cruiser, 2nd class) and arrived at Lake Onega, a pleasant body of water 145 miles long and about 50 miles wide. We got very nice fish out of that lake: salmon,

palaya (a kind of trout), pike and pike perch. Then one fine day we were told to go ashore and dig trenches.

"Who ever heard of sailors fighting in trenches?" one indignant old-line warrant officer grumbled.

"You did. You heard of it now," an officer told him.

So they gave us rifles and put us in trenches and said, "There's the enemy over there." The Red Army was entrenched only a few hundred yards away. Every night about sundown they'd make speeches to us.

"What are you men doing over here?" someone would call in perfect English through megaphones. "We don't want to shoot you. We've got no quarrel with you."

We didn't want to shoot them, either. We had no quarrel with them. We only knew that we were cold, that we were a long way from home and we didn't care who won this family fight. All of our officers and men felt the same way. The Russians we met were fine chaps, affable, friendly. Their own war meant a great deal to them. But even now, after twenty-five years, I don't know what the hell the United States Navy was doing shouldering rifles in trenches in Russia. I must say we fought very half-heartedly. That was the spring of 1919.

When we were recalled, World War I was over, and I was mustered out of the Navy. It had been a good experience. I had learned about steam and engines and, hard-bitten diehard that I was when it came to sailing ships, I realized that my future lay with steam.

«« CHAPTER FIVE »»

My Navy experience helped me land a job as first mate on a Barber Line freighter, the S.S. *Dryden*, and there I met a great man.

He was Captain James Lane, our skipper, a big, vital, handsome man of about sixty-five years, and he knew the sea. He knew ships and cargo and engines, and he knew men. His wife always sailed with him, and I don't know which one the crew feared most—or respected most. Lane was a man Joseph Conrad would have written about, had he known him. Lane had lived on and by the sea all his life and, like the sea itself, he was uncompromising and unpredictable. He was capable of great anger and great courage and great friendship, too. I was twenty-nine when I first sailed under him, and I suppose my feeling for him was a sort of hero worship. He could do everything on a ship better than any man who worked for him. To me he symbolized the strength and character of our country. If he believed that he was right he would have fought an army single-handed. He was stubborn, cantankerous, sometimes, but I guess those are well-ingrained national characteristics. Occasionally, when the sea was calm and the *Dryden* was plowing her way steadily through the water, seemingly by her own efforts, Captain Lane would stand on the bridge, just talking. And I'd listen.

He had gone to sea when he was sixteen—that was in 1870. He made his first trip in a barque, one of those ships which carries square sails on its forward masts but is schooner-rigged on its mizzen or jigger mast. The ship was one day out of Boston and young Lane was asleep in the forecastle when the second mate interrupted his nap with a rude kick. "Get up!" he yelled, and kicked Lane again. The kid didn't like it, so he got up and threw a punch at the mate. They fought as seamen fought in the last century (and sometimes still do), with no holds barred. They fought through the forecastle and emerged on deck, still at it. No one interfered. They fought until Lane had beaten the mate into unconsciousness. Then Lane heard the captain roar, "Come up here, lad!" Lane went up to the poop, prepared to get a dressing down from the skipper, be banished to the brig, to be put in irons, or get a good thrashing.

"So you've fought my second mate, boy," the captain said gravely, "and you've hurt him bad. Well, now I'll need a second mate on this trip. From now on that'll be you."

"But, sir," the astounded Lane stammered through his bleeding lips, "this is my first trip at sea."

"Nevertheless, you're my second mate from now on," the captain said firmly, and that's how Lane's career began.

No matter where we touched we would hear legends of Lane. He was known in every port in the world, I guess. After sailing the seven seas for fifty-odd years there wasn't a port he hadn't hit. You'd go into a bar in New Orleans, for instance, and someone would ask what ship you were off. You'd answer, "The *Dryden*," and the questioner would chuckle, "Ah, that's old Lane's ship. Why, I remember . . ."

One story they still tell in Pensacola is the one concerning

a mutiny aboard a square rigger back in the 1880's. Lane was mate on the ship, and the crew, with an eye to stealing the cargo, mutinied in port. They had chosen a time when the skipper was ashore and Lane was the only officer aboard. He was asleep at the time, but he was awakened by the commotion. Going into the skipper's cabin, he took the skipper's gun and stepped out on deck. When the crew refused to obey his orders he quite calmly shot and killed three of them. The others, thoroughly cowed, ran ashore. Thinking they could escape the charges of mutiny, they hurried to the police and laid a charge of murder against Lane. The police chief routed out the local judge and hurried him to the ship. They grabbed Lane and the judge decided to hold court right there on deck where the three bodies still lay.

"What's your name?" the judge bawled.

"James Lane."

"Where do you come from?"

"Beaufort, North Carolina," Lane said, already feeling handcuffs on his wrists.

"You wouldn't know Mack Lane of Beaufort, would you?" the judge asked.

"He was my father," Lane said.

The judge stood up and looked him over. "Mack Lane's son," he said slowly. "My boy, your father died in my arms at Gettysburg. He was a grand man, a great soldier and my best friend. And, as for this charge against you, boy, I can only say this: you just kill as many of these bastards as you want to, and if anyone tries to stop you come along to me."

Lane treated his men well—when they did their jobs.

When they didn't, he reverted to the methods of the nineties. Once, just before we hit Yokohama, I told Lane that I was having a lot of trouble with one of the seamen, a man named Swenson.

"He's no good, Captain," I told Lane. "He won't work and he's having a bad influence on some of the other men. I want to put him off at Yokohama."

"Nonsense!" Lane roared. "Beat some sense into him."

Well, that was an order. I didn't like the idea much. Swenson was a six-footer who weighed 200 pounds. I am five-foot-seven. I weighed around 170 pounds and was in pretty good shape. But this was an order. I went back to the engine room and told the carpenter to bring Swenson to me. When Swenson arrived I took off my coat and said, "You asked for it." I threw a right-hand punch at him which knocked him down. As he fell he banged his head against the steel bulkhead and slipped into the land of dreams. That wasn't so bad. But in falling he twisted his arm, landed on it and broke it. The arm stuck out grotesquely. I went back to Captain Lane. We were just entering the harbor now.

"Could you signal for a doctor, Captain?" I asked.

"Why?" he asked sharply. I explained about hitting Swenson and the broken arm.

"God damn it, man!" he roared. "I told you to hit him, not to kill him!"

He was a hard man to please, but he taught me my trade, and I'll be eternally grateful to him. Actually, he wore that gruff exterior to hide the softness and gentleness that were natural to him.

We left the port of Hamburg once, and just before we dropped the pilot I got a report that we had a stowaway aboard. There was nothing Lane hated more than a stowaway and, as his chief mate, he would blame me for the presence of the unwelcome guest. I searched the ship and found the stowaway hiding behind some piles of lumber. To my amazement it was a young girl. I took her to my cabin and told her to stay there. Then I reported to Lane. He roared and raved and cursed, and finally told me to bring the girl to his cabin.

"I'll show her," he said grimly, "she can't stow away on my ship. Why, the dirty little tramp, what does she . . . ?

"What are you doing on my ship?" he snarled, when I brought her to his cabin.

I began to feel sorry for her, she looked so frightened.

She told her story. She had fallen in love with one of the crew members and wanted to go to America with him. So she had come aboard and hidden behind the lumber. By now she was tearful. She was a poor girl (fifty to one a tart) and had no job. And she was, she assured us, very much in love.

"Put her into the pilot boat and send her ashore," Lane said to me. "And here, this will take care of you for awhile." He dug his hand into his pocket and it came out filled with French francs. He tossed it to her and stamped angrily out of the cabin.

James Lane, six-feet tall, with his mane of white hair and his big white mustache, came to life again there in my cell at Kiangwan and I relived every moment I'd ever spent

with him and I heard his stories again and again and the cell was filled with his presence and I forgot the stench and the lice and the evil fungus growing on the damp cell walls.

He taught me my trade so well that they gave me command of the *Dryden* when he was transferred, and that was a proud day for me. I was a skipper in steam at thirty, and to me the *Dryden* was the most beautiful ship afloat. Afterward they gave me the *Radnor* and then the *Liberator*. I had become a full-fledged skipper, confident that I could find my way around any body of water in the world. I was in command of the *Liberator* for eight years, and they were eight good years. The *Liberator* was an honest ship, and the Barber line, which owned it, a good line to work for—I think the best in the world.

When you're in prison, especially in solitary, you are subject to just about every degradation the human body and spirit can stand—and some that they can't stand. After awhile you find that your body doesn't matter much. But the Japs are masters at destroying the spirit and breaking your nerve and killing your will to live. You can only combat that by reminding yourself again and again that you are superior to them. Hating them doesn't help; you must develop a disdainful attitude toward them. You tell yourself that these are silly little men just playing at being soldiers. You tell yourself all kinds of lies, or else you succumb to the pressure, and drift into a lethargy in which you are neither dead nor alive. That's what you have to combat. When things were really bad, I would recall the deck of the *Liberator*, which I had trod as master. I was boss of that

ship with a good crew under me. I'd think of those days then laugh at the filthy rice and bread the Japs gave me to eat. I was superior to any conditions they could impose as long as my mind sustained me. And memories of the old *Liberator* helped. One especially: the day I sunk a Japanese submarine.

In 1925 we were making a routine passage from Honolulu to Yokohama. I was on the bridge when John Cleary, my first mate, said, "There's something funny floating just dead ahead." I looked through my glasses and, sure enough, there was a submarine. There was a slight sea and she rolled with it, making no forward progress, which seemed peculiar. I sounded my whistle but got no answering signal. I approached the submarine and hove to. There was no sign of life on her deck, and yet she didn't appear to be damaged. My crew crowded to the rails, looking in wonder at this phenomenon. I told John Cleary and my chief engineer, Nels Johnson, to drop the gig over the side and investigate.

"Watch the air below," I warned him. "Might be full of carbon monoxide."

The boat pulled over to the submarine. The men climbed aboard and then released the dogs on the main conning-tower hatch. Johnson decided to go below, but cautious Cleary insisted upon tying a rope under his arms. It was a good idea. Big Nels went down the conning-tower ladder and promptly passed out. When sea water gets to storage batteries it creates a gas that is deadly if taken in large doses. They revived Nels. There wasn't a sign of life below nor were there any bodies there. This was an eerie situation. How could a perfectly seaworthy sub be out in mid-ocean

without a crew? Had the crew deserted the craft for some reason? I remembered stories of crewless ships that had been found under similar circumstances. The men reported back to the *Liberator*. Everything was securely battened down, they said, but some sea water had leaked into the sub and there was several feet of water in her bilges. The interior of the sub was all shored up with what we always called Foochow poles, really untrimmed trunks of small Japanese pine trees. That meant that she was Japanese-owned, but she was a big sub and had all the earmarks of a German U boat. I thought about towing her into port with us, but the weather reports were bad. A typhoon was heading our way and I knew we were going to have a few bad days. In the weather we were to get any towline would have snapped. But I couldn't leave the submarine floating about. She was a menace to navigation. I told the boys to open all of her hatches. Her decks were almost awash anyhow and as soon as the sea rose she'd fill up and sink. So they went back and opened all of her hatches. Already the sea had risen and the waves broke over her deck and down her open hatches and she began to settle lower in the water.

We went on our way. I sent a report of the incident to my home office and to the hydrographic office in Washington, reporting her exact position. I didn't know it at the time, but the newspapers got hold of the story and treated it as another sea yarn. They kidded the incident and nominated me as the champion liar of the year.

When we reached port there was quite a delegation of Japanese officials to greet me. They were politely sceptical. They knew of no missing submarine. I didn't care much

whether they believed me or not. The next day the Commander-in-Chief of the U. S. Asiatic Fleet asked me to his ship. The American admiral looked at me with tolerant amusement as I repeated the story. Obviously he was thinking, "This merchant mariner wouldn't know a submarine if he fell over one."

He was politely noncommittal when I finished.

"You don't seem to believe my story, Admiral," I said.

"Well, now," he coughed with embarrassment. He didn't want to call me a liar. "No submarine has been reported missing. It seems strange that no other ship sighted it. According to your report she was on a well-traveled shipping lane."

"Oh, well, if you don't believe the story I'm sorry, Admiral." I arose and started for the door. "You're busy, I know, so I'll run along. I'm sorry you haven't more time. I'd have liked to show you the pictures we took of the sub."

"Pictures?" he exploded.

"Oh, yes," I said casually, "I took a few, and Cleary, my mate, took a few and a couple of the crew had cameras. They all took pictures."

"Let's see them, please," he said, his manner entirely changed now.

So I showed him dozens of pictures of the sub as she looked when we sighted her; pictures with Cleary, Johnson and the men aboard her and pictures of her with her hatches open, lying low in the water. He finally capitulated. I had to carry those pictures with me for years to convince men I met in various ports. That story had gone all over the world and no one had believed it. A day or two after seeing

the Admiral I heard the whole story of the submarine from a Japanese naval officer I knew. This was one of the subs given to Japan by Germany as part of her reparations plan after the war. It seems strange now, but during the last war Japan was on our side. A Jap naval vessel was towing the sub to a naval base when a typhoon came up and snapped the towline. There had been no one aboard the sub. They searched but couldn't locate the runaway sub and decided that she had sunk.

In my Kiangwan prison cell I could forget my misery and hunger as I thought of the Liberator *and the men who sailed with me.*

There was the big Swede who ran amuck one day. A brawl started between him and the bosun, and the Swede produced a large razor. The bosun lit out for the bridge, with the Swede right after him. I was standing there with my mate, a husky lad named Thompson. As the Swede ran by I grabbed his wrist. Then Thompson wrapped his strong arms around the crazed Swede. I hung onto the wrist.

"I got him, Skipper," Thompson said. "Let go of him."

I let go and the Swede burst from Thompson's embrace and took a swipe at me with the razor. It missed my throat by perhaps one inch. Luckily, my fist didn't miss his chin, and the Swede went down and out. I felt very much like heaving my mate overboard.

For the most part seamen are just like ordinary people. The chief difference is the fact that they have long periods of celibacy. When they hit a port where there are facilities

for their needs, they are apt to indulge to excess. On the whole, my men on the *Liberator* were a decent lot who might occasionally run wild in port but who were fine to have around in a typhoon. And they believed that the *Liberator* was a lucky ship.

Once we hit some awful weather off Iwo Jima, an island by now pretty well known all over the world. We were in the midst of a full gale. There was a Filipino named Pedro in my crew—a quiet, hard-working man who, after nearly thirty years at sea, was going back home for the first time. When we reached his native island of Cebu he was going to leave the sea for good and retire. I had $6000 in gold belonging to Pedro in my safe. He and a couple of men were taking down the gin blocks (they're used in hoisting cargo out of the holds) when a terrific sea boarded us and carried Pedro right overboard. The boys threw two life buoys after him. I hove the ship to as quickly as I could, but it looked hopeless. We couldn't lower a boat in this weather, and the driving rain had almost eliminated visibility. But you do what you can in such cases. I came about and tried to find the exact position we'd been in when Pedro had been swept off the deck. Then one of those miracles of the sea took place. We spied Pedro being tossed from one wave to another. I brought the ship to windward of him. He still retained enough strength to grab the line we tossed him. And we hauled him up over the side, wet and chilled, but otherwise not much the worse for his experience. Some time later we landed at Cebu. I gave Pedro his $6000 in gold and wished him a long and happy life in retirement. He'd be the richest man in his community, he said. He could pick out

any wife he wished. We all shook his hand and he went ashore. He walked one block and then started to cross a street. An automobile hit him and killed him instantly. Pedro was all right as long as he stayed with the *Liberator*, but his luck ran out when he left her.

There is, I imagine, no feeling comparable to that of being skipper of a ship in which you have complete confidence. All of us on the *Liberator* shared this feeling to some extent. I've sailed the *Liberator* through hurricanes and typhoons and she never faltered. Only a collision could sink that ship. She outrode dirty weather, weather that broke or sank other ships.

She did that once. We were at a place called Pulupandan on the Island of Negros, one of the 3,000 islands that make up the Philippines. This was in 1927. An old friend of mine, Captain Richard Schnellhardt had the S.S. *Elkton* in the same port, and he was sailing the next day for New York. I was to follow him two days later. We played golf that afternoon and, as skippers will do, we got to boasting about our ships. I told him how sturdy and fast and seaworthy the *Lib* was.

"I'm leaving two days after you, but I'll pass you on the way, Dick," I said complacently.

He sliced his drive badly at that, and we made a small bet as to which of us would reach the Panama Canal first. I followed him out of Pulupandan and headed through the Straits of Surigao. We encountered heavy weather immediately. This was the month of February and typhoons are unknown in the Western Pacific at that time. However, all signs pointed to the coming of a typhoon. I radioed Schnell-

hardt, who was some 200 miles northeast of me, suggesting that we exchange hourly weather reports. If you get frequent enough reports you can chart the course of a typhoon and sometimes skirt it or, at any rate, avoid its center. He radioed me, "Barometer 29.17. Falling fast. Whole gale. Very rough sea." I sent him an answer an hour later saying that in my position the weather was moderating, the barometer was rising and evidently the typhoon had passed northeast of my position. A few moments later I received a garbled message from him giving his position, and then, "Come up and stand by." This shocked me, for I knew Schnellhardt to be the kind of man who wouldn't call for help unless the position was desperate. I headed for him right into the teeth of the typhoon, and it wasn't pleasant. A tremendous head sea was running and the *Liberator* was virtually awash, but she answered the increased revolutions I called for. At times only the bridge and the top masts were out of water. The sea did everything it could to bury the *Liberator*. The sea tried to knock her bottom out; tried to cave her decks in; tried to drown her, but she kept on sturdily. We kept sending messages to the *Elkton* but received no answers. The *Lib* kept plowing on through those tremendous seas, groaning a bit, bending a little, but never cracking. This ship had a heart and, if that sounds foolish, ask any seafaring man and he'll explain what I mean. It took us twenty-four hours to get to the *Elkton's* last reported position. The *Elkton* wasn't there, but there was a huge patch of heavy oil on the surface of the sea. We covered an area of 200 square miles looking for signs of the ship but we never even saw a smashed lifeboat. There was nothing—

only that dark ugly patch of oil. The conclusion was inescapable. The *Elkton* had gone down. Probably her hatches had been stove in and she had plummeted down beneath the water; she had gone down so far that finally the pressure had exploded her oil tanks and only the dark patch showed her grave. A year later a lifebelt with S.S. *Elkton* on it was washed up on Samar Island. That marked the end of the story. Poor Schnellhardt and his whole crew were lost. *The Liberator?* She's still in action, as strong and sound as ever.

«« CHAPTER SIX »»

In 1929 I quit the sea to become a Yangtse River captain. The salary was $1500 a month and we earned every cent of it. We commanded specially built 145-foot river boats, speedy and powerful with twin screws and three rudders. The insurance rate covering cargo and ship was twenty-five percent per year, the highest in the world. Bandits were very active on the upper reaches of the river, but the river itself was more active. Twenty-four out of thirty-six of the river ships built in the 1920's were destroyed by the fierce currents and the treacherous rocks that lurked below the dirty yellow water. What distinguishes the Yangtse from other rivers is the fact that her currents are constantly shifting. We always anchored at night, but what had been a safe anchorage the week before might now be a reverse current that wouldn't hold us. Owing to the rise and fall of the river level it would change its contour almost overnight and you'd have to learn it all over again. The Yangtse was born high in the Tibet-Sinkiang region at an altitude of 8,540 feet. It descends gradually until it reaches Chungking, where it is 630 feet above sea level. It has to drop that 630 feet before it reaches the sea. Most of this drop occurs between Chungking and Ichang, and that's where we had most of our trouble. From Ichang to the sea, the Yangtse is a well-be-

haved, normal enough river. The Yangtse is vitally important to the economic life of China. The river boats were owned by the Yangtse Rapids Steamship Company. Lansing Hoyt was the president, and they carried every kind of legal and illegal cargo up and down the river.

Because much of this cargo and the ships were American-owned, a treaty, providing for American protection, had once been signed. We were supposed to have gun crews aboard and sometimes we did, but it always seemed that we only had those gun crews along when the bandits were sleeping. Invariably, when I was attacked, we had not a single marine on board. The bandits would often come aboard at night, if we were anchored too close to shore, or if a suddenly born current swept us toward shore. They could be very cruel. If you handled them right, though, you could sometimes escape with only the loss of your cargo. Chinese, even bandits, love to laugh. When you couldn't beat them with force, you could often kid your way out of dangerous situations. Once my boat was anchored off the bank near Kuei Fu. We carried a light load that trip, and a current swung the boat so that it touched the bank. In no time, 300 bandits, who had been waiting for just such an opportunity, swarmed aboard. My unarmed crew never had a chance. I had never lost a river boat, but now it looked as though I might. Sometimes, after removing the cargo, the bandits would burn the boats, after tossing the crew overboard. I felt pretty bad watching these well-armed ruffians grabbing valuable cargo. One of the bandits tripped over a rope. I was standing right near him as he stumbled, exposing a plump rump, and I couldn't resist the temptation

to give him a healthy slap on the backside. He went sprawling. His companions roared with laughter. Their chief came up and slapped me on the back, howling at his man's discomfiture. I asked the chief to have a drink with me. He and a few of his henchmen came to my cabin and I broke out some Scotch. They loved it. Everything was friendly and everyone was amiable. Looting was their business—they felt no animosity toward me, personally. And soon, half-drunk, they left. True, they took as much cargo as they could carry, but they didn't kill any of the crew, nor did they burn the boat. That slap on the rump had put them in a generous frame of mind.

A few of the captains made fortunes by bringing opium down the river. This was against the law of the country and contrary to our orders, but captains were hard to get and regulations weren't enforced very closely. I was traveling as a passenger on one of the boats one night. Just as I was getting to sleep the engines stopped. That seemed strange since we were in a calm part of the river which we always navigated at night. I ran on deck and saw a disquieting sight. Some thirty sampans were heading toward us, loaded with armed bandits. I ran to the captain's cabin but he wasn't there. However, I found a riot gun on his bunk and brought it out on deck. I yelled to the leading sampan to stop or I'd shoot. It didn't stop and I hit the leader of that sampan, who had been standing up in the bow. He got the full charge of buckshot in his belly and dropped overboard. Before I could shoot again the captain came running, pleading with me to stop.

"These are friendly bandits," he said. "Everything is arranged."

Everything was arranged. The bandits came aboard and took away seventeen piculs (2,261 pounds) of opium and gave the captain a bagful of silver dollars. This was merely a rendezvous point the captain had arranged with the bandits. In addition to his legal cargo, he had carried the opium as his own private cargo. The bandits never mentioned the man who was killed. No one seemed to care about him, except me. I was burning mad. Not at the illegal opium trade —that was none of my business—but at the idea I hadn't been told that there were friendly bandits.

"I ought to kill you now, you miserable rat," I told the captain.

"What is one more or less bandit, Smitty?" he said, amazed at my anger.

I didn't kill him and my conscience has often bothered me about that. He was responsible for the loss of that poor man's life more than I was. I thought that I was repelling bandits. I was killing a businessman who had come on peaceful and, to him, routine business. Two nights later, in Hankow, I saw the captain throw $300 on the bar and tell the bartenders to keep champagne coming for everyone in the place until the $300 had gone. He was a kindly enough man ordinarily, but life was so cheap on the Yangtse that if you didn't watch yourself you were apt to lose your sense of values. About eighty percent of us never ran opium or smuggled silver dollars on the river. There was no need to. Fifteen hundred dollars a month (American) was a fortune in China then. You couldn't spend more than $150 a month,

unless you lived in barrooms, and if you lived in barrooms you wouldn't last long at our type of pinprick navigation. Your nerves and your judgment had to be good or your ship wouldn't survive two trips.

The fantastic, the out-of-the-ordinary, was routine on the river. There was a story in every captain you met, a story in every trip you made. You'd never meet a man like Joe Miclo anywhere in the world but on the river. For a long time Joe Miclo was one of my best friends in China. He was as hard as nails and he could hit like a mule. He feared no one and had respect for no one's feelings, except for his friends'. Joe worshipped his friends; they could do no wrong. But he was sour on the rest of the world and never missed a chance to show how he felt. He had been with the Coast Guard in the Philippines; but the word "discipline" was one he never could understand, when applied to him, and he and the Coast Guard soon parted—not very amicably. He came to Shanghai and became a river captain—one of the best. He was absolutely ruthless with his crew, and, for that matter, with his passengers.

He was a skipper of a Standard Oil boat for a time, and a director of the company who had just come to the East took a trip on Joe's boat. He was a harmless enough man. He just didn't know the rules. I guess it's pretty much a universal rule of the sea, as well as rivers, that passengers stay off the bridge unless invited by the captain. The Standard Oil director didn't know this. Joe Miclo was navigating a particularly tough part of the river one day when the Standard Oil man popped up cheerfully on the bridge.

"Get off my bridge, you son-of-a-bitch!" Joe yelled, throw-

ing a right-hand punch with the words. The director went down and out. That was Joe's last trip with the Standard Oil. He came over to our company after that.

I traveled as a passenger aboard Joe's boat, the *Ichang*, once. We were heading up the river and I was admiring the way Joe ran his boat. He had two lookouts on the bridge, one to port, the other to starboard. Suddenly, Joe started swearing. He strode up to the starboard lookout. Without a word, he swung his heavy fist at the man's jaw and he went down as though he had been poleaxed.

"I told you to keep looking straight ahead, not off to starboard!" he roared, but the man lay there unconscious. Then Joe came back to where I was standing and resumed our conversation where we had left off. The Chinese crews feared and hated Joe Miclo. Some of my Chinese friends, knowing how much I liked Joe, tried to warn me.

"There is a lot of hatred felt for him," they would say seriously. "He should be more careful or something very bad may happen to him."

I didn't dismiss these warnings. I knew how cruel and vindictive the Chinese can be, if they are convinced a man is their enemy. And Joe, God knows, had given them provocation enough. I tried to warn him, but he only laughed.

"Maybe they'll get me, but I'll take plenty of the bastards with me," he laughed.

Well, they got him. One night he went to his cabin while the ship was underway and in the middle river. He had a naval armed guard of five men aboard so he expected no trouble from bandits. He went to his cabin, presumably to sleep, leaving orders to be awakened at 4 A.M. When his

steward went to wake him, he had disappeared. No one had heard a sound during the night, not even the marines who were on watch. But Joe Miclo was never seen again. When the boat returned to Shanghai, I questioned the crew. I couldn't get a hint from them as to what had happened. Later, old Chinese friends of mine told me they had heard rumors to the effect that Joe had been thrown into the river. How that could be done without a sound, I don't know, but I was willing to accept the story. That was one of the worst punishments a Chinese could mete out to an enemy and their hatred for Joe made it the logical punishment.

There is a strongly ingrained Chinese belief that if a man dies and his body is not buried, his soul will never rise to Fengtu, the entrance to Hades where souls are judged. It is here that the Chinese God, Feng Huang, dwells. Feng Huang is Chinese for "phoenix" and I suppose is symbolic of the fact that souls can arise phoenixlike from the ashes of their dead bodies and go on to a happier life hereafter. There are other versions of this legend, but this is the one I have heard most.

In his lifetime, Joe Miclo, like every other foreigner, probably scoffed at this legend, but in the end it apparently caught up with him. Half the foreign population of Shanghai has been trying for ten years to think of a rational explanation of what happened after Joe's death, but none of us has been able to come up with one.

To carry the legend one step further, the Chinese believe that a soul that cannot go to Fengtu wanders about the world looking for a body to inhabit. Only by doing that, and eventually being buried in that body, can it achieve immor-

tality and life in the other world. Now, it is difficult for a soul to enter an ordinary healthy body, but sometimes this can be done. Joe Miclo disappeared on the night of November 2, 1931. On the night of November 2, 1932, exactly one year later, the *Ichang* was underway, bound up-river. One of the seamen uttered a wild shriek, and then a bull-like roar. A dozen of the crew heard him and afterward testified that it was the voice of Joe Miclo. Then the seaman shrieked again and dove overboard. His body was never recovered.

Sounds silly. We laughed in Shanghai when we heard the story two days later. I investigated and stopped laughing. I talked to members of the crew and they swore that things had happened as they had been reported. The explanation was very plausible to them. Joe's soul had been looking for a body and it had entered the seaman's and taken possession of him. But because the body of the seaman had never been recovered, and therefore could not be buried, they feared that Joe's soul might still be hovering about looking for another body. At the round table in the American Club in Shanghai, we talked about Joe occasionally, but the talk died down until November 2, 1933. Incredibly, the same thing happened. The *Ichang* was again up-river, and again a seaman went berserk and threw himself over the side. One more year passed and the performance was repeated, on November 2, 1934. Three consecutive years had seen the same thing happen. What is the explanation? I don't know. I do know that in three years, on the same date, from the same ship, three seamen went into some kind of frenzy and lost their lives. This part is history—the log of the *Ichang* shows it and the reports made by her captain prove it. But

for the rest you have to ask China, and China seldom answers occidentals. I lost track of the *Ichang* after that.

One more postscript to Joe's life and death. Joe had found a very lovely young girl in Shanghai. He sent her to a convent to be educated. Joe really loved this beautiful youngster, and he told us that he was leaving all of his money to her. He had only one relative, a sister, in the States, and he had no interest in her. To make certain that all his worldly possessions go to the girl, he made out a will which some of us witnessed for him. He always used to carry it around with him. When Joe disappeared, the will disappeared with him. So some relative he hadn't seen for thirty years came into a fortune of $100,000 while the girl he loved—well, a few months later she married someone else and at last reports was living happily ever after.

The legends of the mighty Yangtse have become part of the folklore of the Chinese people. Near the upper end of the stupendous Wushan Gorge lies a swift rapid with a steeply inclined surface which makes it hard going for river craft; but it has never caused the loss of a single junk, nor even the loss of life which is so common in the wild and turbulent rapids of this region. The name of this stretch is Tiao Shih Tan—Rapid of the Dancing Stones. Within the appalling depths of this stretch there dwelt many centuries ago three stones scarcely larger than a doubled fist. At the first hint of dawn, and late in the evening, and even at times when the river was in violent spate, these stones would rise to the surface and, leaping high in the air, literally dance together. The joyous sound of their colliding together in mid-air could be heard for many yards on calm days when the rapid was

not roaring too loudly. The river men recognized these stones as being the immortals they were—for, men who follow the sea, be it deep-water or river, are quick to grasp the supernatural. These men would not have molested the stones for anything, but one sad day a peasant living nearby took a long-handled dip net with him and before dawn secreted himself behind a large stone at the waterside. When the stones emerged to dance he succeeded in capturing one of them. Hurrying to his hut, he examined the stone thoroughly but could find nothing unusual in its appearance. Angrily he tossed it into his cupboard, in which lay several grains of rice—the last of his food supply. Moodily he went about his daily labors, wondering where his next meal would come from. Returning to the hut late in the day he found his cupboard so full of rice that its door had given under the strain. Elated, he realized that he had captured one of those rare, beneficent spirits, from which nothing evil can come. In the evening he strolled back to the rapid to find its character completely changed. The water now moaned and groaned, and vast and vicious whirlpools marred the usually rippled surface. Junks were gathered below and above, none of the boatmen daring to enter the grimly threatening water. The peasant was quick of comprehension, and a guilty conscience was stabbing at his imagination. Late that night he crawled to the river's bank and hurled the stone far into the stream. Even before it touched the water two other stones leaped from the surface and met it with a caressing clash. The waters subsided into a pleasant rippling, and shouts of joy came from the boatmen. The chastened and subdued peasant returned to his hut and found that his cup-

board was now filled with many thousands of taels of gold and silver "shoes." In immemorial fashion he lived happily thereafter, at peace with his conscience and never hungry. Even to this day, the quiet and early wanderer may crouch by the river bank at dawn and hear the faint and joyous clashing of the "dancing stones" far out in mid-stream.

Just above the old walled town of Wushan, and paralleling the river, lies a massive stone bridge over a narrow and precipitous gorge. The name of this bridge is Hei Shih Chao, literally, Black Stone Bridge. Back in the romantic days of the Three Kingdoms, the Emperor who governed these regions was forward-looking and progressive. He realized that lack of transportation was hampering the development of his people. Calling for his Minister of Public Works, he ordered that highways and bridges be constructed throughout his kingdom. His Majesty had ordered an especially wide road to parallel the river, which was not navigable during extremely low water or during the spring and summer spates which roared down from the surrounding mountains. For more than a year the work progressed swiftly and peacefully. Sections above and below Wushan had been completed, and the whole system was ready for the grand opening, except for the final arch of the bridge where Hei Shih Chao now stands. The Emperor himself, with his picturesque court, had come down to see the completion of the last stage. The keystone was lowered into position, and the shoring removed. The bridge collapsed, carrying a number of workmen to their death. The Son of Heaven was furious at the delay—not the deaths, as becomes a truly Royal Sovereign—but granted amnesty to his Minister of Public Works

under the condition that the building of the bridge be hurried to a successful conclusion. Again the scene was enacted —and the Minister was beheaded, as was his successor, and the one after him. Each time the bridge collapsed and carried men to their death. The most skilled bridge builders in the Kingdom tried without success to complete the job. The Emperor was furious, and the time came when no one would volunteer for the exalted position of Minister of Public Works. Finally, a good fairy who inhabited the neighborhood appeared in a dream to a poor but worthy youth who was struggling to keep body and soul together, with little success. This fairy informed the lad that in the whole world there was but one stone which could be successfully used as a keystone. This stone was rather irregular in shape for the purpose and was of a dead-black color. Upon awakening the next morning, the youth searched the countryside and found just such a stone being used as a hearthstone by an old poverty-stricken widow who lived alone in a tiny, decrepit shack by the river. When questioned by the youth, she revealed that years before a fairy had appeared to her and told her never to part with the stone except in the direst necessity. The time had come, for she no longer had food, and scarcely enough clothing to cover her withered body. The youth concluded an agreement with her and hurried to the court, where he prostrated himself before the august Son of Heaven, and begged that His Majesty allow him to finish construction of the bridge. This favor was graciously granted, as no one else in the whole kingdom dared take the chance. The youth had workmen aid him in installing the black stone, and the bridge stood, and still stands after all

these centuries, as firm as the surrounding hills. The youth was given the permanent berth of Minister of Public Works and was loaded with honors. In keeping with his character, he rewarded the old woman with an ample pension to keep her in comfort the rest of her days. Even now, after many attempts by the Japanese to destroy this venerable landmark, the bridge shows every sign of being one with eternity.

That was the river filled with shifting currents and strange legends and superstitions. I worked the river for five years and made 122 round trips between Chungking and Ichang. Although I never lost a ship (a river record), I never felt that I fully understood the river or the river people. I was constantly seeing things that I couldn't believe, but I soon learned not to rationalize, with hard-headed Western insistence, the mysterious ways of China.

In 1935 I became a member of the Shanghai Pilots' Association and got married. These were the only two pleasant things that happened in China that year, as far as I was concerned. The Japs were getting tougher and tougher. They had smashed into Manchuria and it would be only a question of time when they reached Shanghai. But meanwhile I brought the big Empress ships, the *President Coolidge*, the NYK liners, the Blue Funnel ships, and hundreds of others into Shanghai. Our duties as pilots were not arduous. We picked up the big ships outside the mouth of the Yangtse River and brought them fifty-six miles into the docks of Shanghai. Fourteen miles of that fifty-six were difficult to navigate. This was the narrow part of the river and it was filled with eddies and shifting currents and the

traffic was two-way. You couldn't afford to make a mistake or you might lose a thirty-thousand-ton liner. But we knew the river—we forty pilots—and mistakes were few and far between. No ship was permitted to enter the river unless one of us piloted it. We ourselves fixed the number of pilots in the association and we pooled the fees received. Each month the money was divided equally among us. I was to keep on piloting until a few days before Pearl Harbor, but that, back in 1935, was in the very distant future.

And I met Rita then. Fate, in the form of a punch-drunk prizefighter, brought us together. Sid Keenan was a good featherweight fighter who had been champion of Australia. He had come to fight in Shanghai, liked the city, and settled down there. Sid was what, in boxing circles, would be known as a crowd pleaser. His idea of defense was to throw punches. He threw punches until the other fellow dropped or he dropped. But he didn't drop very often. He was a terror in the ring but a gentle, sweet-tempered man outside it. As fighters will, he finally came to the end of the road. Poor Sid had taken too many punches in his ring career. It had left him unfit for any other kind of work. Those of us who had enjoyed him in the ring took care of him now. Occasionally, some well-to-do family would hire Sid to teach their youngsters boxing. There was one such family in Shanghai and the two boys of the family liked Sid so much they persuaded their parents to let the boxer have a spare room in the house. So Sid lived there happily, and in return he took fine care of the kids. Occasionally, I'd see Sid around town and he was always full of praise for a Russian girl who was staying with the family. Her father and mother were in

Manchuria and she had moved in with these old friends of theirs for a long visit.

"She is beautiful, Smitty," Sid would say. "You must come and meet her. Honest, Smitty, she is just your type."

"Sure, Sid," I'd say, and beat it for the American Club. But Sid never let up on me. He was determined that I should meet this paragon. He caught me one afternoon, when I didn't have a thing to do, and more to humor him than anything else, I went along. I met Rita and gulped. One look at her dark loveliness and I knew that I was one lost sea captain.... Two months later we were married.

I guess Rita and I were the two happiest people in the world during the late 1930's. We had everything. I was making more money than we could spend; we had a nice house and five good servants; we had good friends whom we liked. We had everything that the gods can give two human beings.

Then in 1937 the Japs began to attack in the Shanghai area. Rita had gone to Tsing Tao, a summer resort in Shang Tung province to spend the summer. This was about 360 miles from Shanghai, a lovely seaside playground where the wives of naval officers usually went on vacation. I breathed more easily when I knew she was there. Meanwhile, business continued almost as usual in Shanghai.

At the beginning of hostilities the *U.S.S. Augusta* came into port. Our old friend, Commander Tex Settle, was on board. When I told him that Rita was in Tsing Tao, he said that we could communicate with each other through him, via the ship's radio. There was no telephone or telegraph com-

munication between Shanghai and the resort and no ships were calling at Shanghai.

"She can go to the naval station there and send me a wire through naval communications," Settle said. "I'll wire and tell her."

Two days later Settle handed me a message from Rita which pleased me greatly. Settle was pleased too—but we didn't know the complications that the message would cause. The telegram read, "Darling, have chance to proceed to Wei Hai Wei. Can get to Shanghai from there. Love." I learned afterward that Rita had heard that Shanghai was in ruins from the Jap bombing. She had decided to come home. Rita was never one to duck trouble. Settle and I learned the story of the telegram some weeks later. Rita had written it out in the naval station and had asked the yeoman behind the desk the correct spelling of Wei Hai Wei. The yeoman wasn't sure but the woman standing in line behind Rita heard her request and said, "Can I help you?" Rita handed over the wire she had written and asked, "Did I spell Wei Hai Wei correctly?" The woman took in the short message, addressed to Commander T. G. Settle, *U.S.S. Augusta*, at a glance, looked sharply at Rita, and nodded numbly. Rita wondered at her agitation. It wasn't until weeks later that she learned that the woman behind her was Tex Settle's wife. Poor Mrs. Settle got the shock of her life, seeing this beautiful, dark girl sending what was apparently a very endearing message to her own husband. Afterward we became great friends with Mrs. Settle and we could laugh about it.

Of course, I had no idea when Rita would be able to get

back to Shanghai. A week or two later I brought in a British transport, loaded with troops. The Japs were bombing and shelling, so we were forced to anchor about fifteen miles from Shanghai, where she would be comparatively safe. Then I got aboard a tug to complete the trip into the city. H. R. Knickerbocker, the war correspondent, was a passenger in the ship. He was anxious to get to the scene of hostilities so I took him ashore with me in the tug. I was greatly impressed with the red-headed Texan and we became good friends. That was quite an afternoon. Ahead of us was a British tramp. She was escorted by the two British destroyers which had convoyed my transport. A Jap destroyer signaled the tramp to stop. When she failed to respond, the Jap destroyer sent up a message in the international code, "Stop or we will fire." Almost as though it were rehearsed, the two British destroyers darted ahead to get between the Jap destroyer and the British tramp. We could see the men at the guns of the British destroyer. They were all set to blow that Nip destroyer out of the water if she as much as fired a signal rocket. But she didn't fire, and the tramp continued on.

"Is it always like this on the river," Knick asked gravely, "or is this just a special show they're putting on for new arrivals?"

We continued up the Whangpu River and caught up with the dirty-looking tramp filled with coal and passengers. She was the *Rosalie Moller*. The passengers, who seemed to fill every inch of the decks, were a grimy lot, their faces covered with coal dust. On arriving at Shanghai, she dropped anchor 200 feet off the Bund.

The Japanese flagship, *Idzmo*, was anchored in the river

and Chinese pilots were trying to hit her. The inaccuracy of their bombing was amazing. No bombs fell within a quarter of a mile of the big battlewagon, but plenty fell close to other quite innocent ships anchored around. The Japanese now held Shanghai proper, but the Chinese were directly across the river in the Pootung area. Both sides were shelling, and the shells kept going directly over the unfortunate *Rosalie Moller*. Looking up, as we passed, we could see hundreds of frightened faces. Many of the shells were falling short, close to the ship, and those that went over her screamed horribly. I cursed her captain for a fool in exposing his passengers to such unnecessary danger. We berthed off our office and I went into the pilots' room. There was a telegram for me. I opened it casually, chatting with Knick meanwhile, and then, when I read it, I froze. It was from Rita, saying she was sailing from Tsing Tao, in the *Rosalie Moller*. She was out there in that filthy ship, trapped in the crossfire of Jap and Chinese bullets.

I leaped into one of our launches, and sped the 200 feet to the *Rosalie*. I looked up at the rail and there was Rita. Her face was almost black, but I could pick her out from the hundreds of others who were peering down. There was no ladder, but there was a rope hanging from the rail and I climbed up. Rita seemed about the only one who wasn't scared, but she never did scare easily. I told her to gather any friends she had and that we'd get out of there fast. I couldn't take more than fifteen or so in my small launch. Then I headed for the bridge to see the captain. His name was Green, a surly, ill-tempered man who didn't give a damn about his passengers.

"I can put you alongside the jetty so you can disembark

your passengers," I said, after introducing myself as a Shanghai pilot. "There will be no charge."

"The hell with the passengers!" he growled, "they're just cargo to me."

"There's a good chance your ship will be hit and a lot of them will be killed," I said, trying hard to control my temper. He just shrugged his shoulders.

"Will you give the order to lower the gangplank so I can take my wife and as many others as my launch will hold off the ship?"

"No," he said coldly, "I'm too busy."

"Do you mind if I ask the chief officer to lower the gangplank?" I asked.

"I don't give a damn what the chief officer does," he said, turning away.

I went to the chief officer, who was as amiable and friendly as the captain was surly.

"I'd be delighted," he grinned, and down came the gangplank from the side where it had been secured. By now Rita had gathered some thirty women and they climbed down the gangplank and into the launch, which I'd had brought around to the starboard side. The launch was twenty-five feet overall and we crowded the thirty passengers into it. The water lapped against its gunwales but we didn't swamp. Rita said that just before I had appeared, she and several other women had decided to swim for shore. They were sure the ship would be hit and they would rather risk the treacherous current and filthy water than stay aboard her. I shuddered at the thought.

I hurried Rita home as fast as possible. She took a look

at herself in the mirror and screamed. Then she dove into a tub. She had three baths before she had cleaned the coal dust away. There had been no bathing facilities in the *Rosalie Moller*, she said, and the coal dust had seeped into everything. It had been a horrible four-day trip, with virtually no food or water. As Captain Green had said, the passengers were only cargo to him. He was a pretty nasty piece of humanity.

The next night we held a celebration at the Tower Room of the Cathay Hotel. The music was soft and the champagne was cold, and the food was delicious. Knick was with us and Emily Hahn and Arthur Mencken, the great combat photographer. It was peaceful and now, in retrospect, Rita was laughing at the discomforts of the trip. Knick and Rita and I walked out onto a balcony. The Chinese were raiding the city. Searchlights poked their long fingers into the night. Now and then the dull explosion of a bomb would drown out the music. We held glasses of champagne in our hands and, from our fourteenth-story height, it seemed as though we were mere spectators at a war being fought by people far below in another world.

"I must say," Knick said, with a contented sigh, "this is a de-luxe way of covering a war."

Sitting in my filthy cell at Kiangwan, I thought of all this and thought of how Rita had looked that night, and I was glad that, over her protests, I'd sent her to America in 1940. I'd get out somehow, sometime, and she'd be waiting for me. As long as I had my memories and thoughts of the future, solitary confinement couldn't hurt me.

«« CHAPTER SEVEN »»

On the fifty-second day they opened our cells and brought us back into the courtroom to hear our sentences. I looked at Woolley. He was smiling. Nothing could disturb that hunk of British granite. Commander Cunningham had lost weight and he didn't look too well. Big Dan Teters, the civilian, had lost weight too, but he was still in good spirits. My boy Liu hadn't changed a bit. The five of us wondered if it would be beheading or torture or shooting, but we stood there stoically enough. The judge (the one-star general) cleared his throat and read the long sentence. The interpreter assigned to relay the sentence to us couldn't speak any English at all. I translated for the benefit of my fellow prisoners. Cunningham, Woolley and I were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment. Teters was given two years, and Liu only one year. Cunningham, Woolley and I, in addition, were to be deprived of all military and civilian rights.

"You have no right to do that," I protested. "The Geneva Convention expressly states that officers cannot be deprived of their military status or privileges."

"We Japanese never ratified the Geneva Convention," the judge declared coldly. "You men have deserted the Japanese Army in time of war. Therefore you are tried by the domestic law just like any other Japanese citizen."

It was hard to keep from laughing at such absurd logic, but this was no time to laugh. Instead, I looked as serious as possible.

"Does this also mean," I asked, "that we lose our rights as Japanese citizens?"

"Yes, you do," the general said.

"That means," I asked sadly, "that we could not even vote for Tojo, if he ran for office?"

"That is correct," he answered icily.

"So sorry." I shook my head. "So sorry."

"Tell him," Woolley nudged me, "that we want a translation of the sentence."

"What the hell do you want that for?" I asked Woolley.

"It'll be a nice souvenir to have once we escape from their God damn prison," Woolley said. I made my request and they assured me that it would be considered. We never did receive the translation. It would have certainly been a fantastic legal document for any lawyer's collection. The part about being deprived of our military rights was a blow. This meant that we could be put into ordinary civilian prisons with civilian criminals, and we would be treated as such, not as prisoners of war. However, there was nothing we could do about it. They marched us out of the courtroom and back to a large cell. We were all put into the same cell and we had a rather merry reunion. Teters did most of the talking. He loved to talk. The solitary had affected him more than any of us. He was a gregarious man who liked company and song and laughter. A dozen times the guards opened our door and told us sharply to be quiet. One of them finally said that we'd be there for a few days

before being transferred to another prison. If we had money he would be glad to get us anything we wanted from outside. Strangely enough, we all wanted the same thing—sweets. It had been a long time since we had tasted anything sweet. Evidently our bodies craved sugar. The guard promised to help us and the next day he came with a huge bag of soya-bean sweets. He had brought us eight pounds of the sweet mixture. With the addition of sugar and flavoring, bean curd makes delicious candies and cakes. It seemed as though our energy returned with every mouthful. It didn't matter how the guard had cheated us on the price.

"I wish we could get out tonight," I told Woolley.

"Well, if we had a couple of guns we could, at that," he said. Woolley would have fought a Jap cruiser from a row-boat, armed with a bow and arrow. But there was no chance of getting out that night. Or the next night. Or the next month, or the next year. But we didn't know that then. This was June 8, 1942.

The next morning we were taken by truck to the Ward Road Jail. I knew this jail well and my heart sank when I realized that this would be our home. No one had ever escaped from this prison. It had been built by the International Settlement to house criminals. It was surrounded by a wall twenty-five feet high. Inside there was a huge rotunda. From it, like spokes of a wheel, stretched seven-storied blocks of cells. It was the perfect escape-proof jail. Even if you escaped from the main building you still had to scale a twenty-five-foot wall, and, if by some miracle you overcame that barrier and dropped to the other side, you'd find yourself in

one of the busiest sections of Shanghai with streets crowded with Japanese. But we'd escape somehow; that I knew.

Most of our warders, oddly enough, were British, Americans and Russians. The Japanese had kept them on. The head warder, an ex-Royal Navy man, named Chadderton, apologized profusely to us for the anomalous position he held.

"However, our consciences are clear," he told us. "I wrote a letter to the Japs and we all signed it. In it we disclaimed all responsibility for the safety of Allied prisoners."

Actually, of course, Chadderton and the others were virtual prisoners themselves. They really had the status of "trustees." The prison was in charge of Mori, who was half American, half Japanese. This was the world's largest prison, with 9,300 inmates, of whom only about forty were military or political prisoners. The rest were common criminals. We were led to separate cells and when I saw mine I was torn between joy and despair. It was fairly large and there was actually a clean flush toilet and running water. I mentally thanked the British engineers who had designed and built it. But then I looked at the window. It had four upright and three horizontal iron bars across it. I could just reach it. The door was of steel with five upright bars. Woolley was quartered directly across from me. After the door clanged shut I looked over to Woolley's cell and was surprised to see him waving his arms energetically. He was sending me a message in the good old Navy semaphore, using his arms to spell out the letters. I laughed out loud. This meant that we could always communicate with each other, even at periods when we were ordered to be silent.

We settled down into the routine of the place. It was a

dreary routine, but the trustees did their best to make things endurable for us. The food was monotonous but at first it was sustaining enough. We were given a cup of boiled barley each morning and a thin watery soup at night, but we also received sixteen ounces of edible bread per day, and it was this which kept us alive. And there was plenty of drinking water and hot tea twice a day. In theory we were allowed two hours of exercise daily, but actually we never got that. We did get about an hour outdoors each day and that hour soon became a precious interlude that kept us going. There was a prison library and we were allowed to take out one book a week to read in our cells. Chinese friends of ours had salvaged some of the books from the American Club and they sent them to us in bales. The strange thing about Ward Road Jail was the fact that although we were almost hermetically sealed we knew what was going on at all times and we could communicate with friends outside easily.

We even heard the news of Jimmy Doolittle's raid on Tokyo and it thrilled us. A few days later our elation changed to horror when we heard that some of the pilots had been captured and beheaded in public in Tokyo. Later, much later, during our escape, we were to pass Doolittle's own plane. The Chinese have made a shrine, complete with plaque, of the crash-landed remnants, and have fenced it in neatly. It should remain as a reminder of grim courage for many years, since it is far beyond the haunts of our souvenir hunters. The scenic beauty which surrounds the wreck is as timeless and as eternal as are the acts of bravery which led to the feat itself.

The books were a great help to "morale," if I can use that

miserable word. I've never met a member of our armed forces who didn't hate that word. But the books helped pass the time. As a seafaring man, I chose a lot of books dealing with the sea but, with a few exceptions, I can't say I liked them much. To say that Joseph Conrad knew more about men than he knew about the sea would be almost heresy to devotees of the Polish master. Of course he was a professional seafarer who wrote masterpieces. Yet, to my mind, he always wrote so much more magnificently about the storms of personality than about the actual storms of the elements. He dealt with basic conflicts—psychic, moral and physical—among men. That they were at sea was an act of blind Fate. Great sea stories, in my opinion, are not about men who go down to sea in ships but rather of the sea itself, the sea which transmutes human character and lifts it above and beyond its ordinary limitations. The captain in *Typhoon*, however, is a man of extremely limited capacity who rises far above himself, and becomes a mild demi-god for a short period, due to the sea having formed in him a strength of mind and a singleness of purpose worthy of his mistress. There is, to me, more true flavor of the sea in Charles Danà's *Two Years Before the Mast* than in all of Conrad.

As grand a writer as McFee is, it is rare that his characters have been formed by and on the sea; most of them smack of the long-shore. His captain in *Command* is excellent, but I doubt if Mr. McFee ever succeeded in detaching himself completely from the beach in spirit, despite his years of experience at sea. He shows sympathy at times and understanding at others. But rarely, if ever, does he exhibit

sympathetic understanding of the sea itself as the dominant force in the destiny of the men who are held in its power.

Melville ranks high in the sea yarns of all time. His mysticism captures that tense calm which usually precedes a line squall—which may mean nothing to your man in steam, but which is inimical and awesome to those who have dealt with, rather than on, the sea. I'd like to see justice done to Morgan Robertson—our own Robertson. His stories rank as high with me as those of Conrad and other masters, and he has the added attraction of attaining authenticity through his intense objectivity. He is as definite and as real as a broken forestay. His writing is grandeur without art. I wonder why more people haven't read him, especially his *Grain Ship*. His simplicity and lack of artifice become pure joy when they strike a receptive mind.

I found that the library had a copy of *War and Peace* and it was like meeting an old friend.

Now and then our trustees would get a chance to loiter and talk to us. My cell, they told me, had housed many distinguished guests. Jack Riley, the slot-machine king of Shanghai, had been quartered here. He had been extradited to the States and put into jail in Oklahoma. But he had bought his way out and later the governor who had helped him was impeached. Sam Titleman, a United States marshal, had been lodged here after having been found guilty of selling American army forty-fives to Chinese bandits. There were others equally celebrated in the world of crime—murderers, gamblers, forgers, thieves—whose ghosts inhabited my cell, but I must say they were quiet ghosts who never kept me awake.

Man's ingenuity seems to reach its apex under the worst of conditions. There are many tricks to the jailbird's trade. Occasionally cigarettes were smuggled into the jail—frequently by Jap warders, who were all on the make. The prisoners lighted these in one of two odd ways. Our winter uniforms were heavily padded with cotton batting. The usual method was to roll a piece of batting into a compact piece about the size and length of one's little finger. This was placed on the concrete flooring and rolled violently back and forth under one foot with as much pressure as could be brought to bear. After a few seconds, the now compact and friction-heated batting was picked up as quickly as possible, broken in two and breathed on gently and steadily. When done properly, the cotton would burst into a glow which could be kept alight for a minute or more. Another method was even easier. Most of the jail uniforms were fitted with metal buttons. One of these would be attached to a doubled piece of raveled yarn from our canvas clothing. Then, by alternately pulling and slacking the yarn the button could be made to revolve at a high rate of speed. While thus revolving, the button was allowed to touch any hardened piece of steel, such as the bars, and the resultant sparks were made to alight onto a fluffed-out piece of cotton batting. As soon as the slightest glow showed, gentle blowing was resorted to, and a light was had in short order.

We had one man in prison who, under different circumstances probably would have been an artist of note. Our issue bread was fortified with 30 per cent of ground wood-fiber. When the soft part of this bread was compressed and kneaded with the fingers it would harden into something

like plastic wood. This man made me a set of chessmen with his bare hands and fingernails for tools which would have reflected credit on a well-equipped and able woodcarver. These hardened beautifully, and as one-half of the set had been blackened with soot from our galley range, I lacked only a board and an opponent to find temporary happiness. A warder found this set concealed in my room later, and it was taken from me. We were not allowed anything with which to pass the time away as "we were there for punishment." This prisoner also made a beautiful cross for me from the handles of several different colored toothbrushes. He accomplished this by wearing down the parts against the concrete walls until they fitted so beautifully that it required some effort to break the whole apart when it was set up. An amusing incident was created by this same man one day. Several new prisoners were brought in by the Japs. All were handcuffed. Although the accompanying gendarmes had the key, they were unable to unlock one set. The artistic prisoner watched the scene with amusement, and then, when all attempts had failed, asked one of the Japs to get him a small nail. He bent this against a bar and, with this as a tool, opened the handcuffs instantly.

Gradually we got to know some of our fellow prisoners. After four months, a delegation of marines, members of the Pekin legation guard who had been confined with us at Woosung, joined us. They had escaped, but, after seventeen days of freedom, were recaptured and sent to Bridge House for the inevitable "questioning." They had been starved and beaten, but they were marines and they knew how to take it. I remember the first time Woolley and I saw them. It

was our exercise hour and we were walking in the yard. They came out and blinked in the bright sunlight. I looked them over appraisingly. So did Woolley. We didn't say a word but just looked at each other, and then Woolley smiled. "You're thinking of the same thing I am, Smitty," he said.

"That's right," I nodded. "That husky young marine might do nicely."

"Well, that's what I was thinking," he grinned.

Escape! Escape! That's all Woolley and I ever thought of. We knew it would take a miracle to accomplish it, but we were willing to believe in miracles. We had decided that a team of three would be our best bet. We needed a strong, courageous young man as our third member. This marine we were inspecting looked as though he might fill the bill.

One day we fell into conversation with the marine and pumped him cautiously. His full name was Jerold B. Storey, and he was from Bloomington, Illinois. He had gone right from high school into the Army Signal Corps and had served a three-year hitch. He had tried civilian life but evidently was one of those rare individuals who likes professional soldiering. He had joined the marines in 1940. Everything we learned about him impressed us. He was a real soldier and a husky, well-built lad.

Of course, Woolley and I still had absolutely no idea as to how we'd ever get out, but we knew we'd find a way some day. Corporal Storey began to shape up as the third member of our escape party. We decided to broach the subject to him.

"Count me in, Commander," he said, joyfully.

"You know it's beheading if we're caught, as we may well be," I reminded him.

Storey shrugged his shoulders. "That's all right with me, Commander," he said.

This was our man, we decided, and nothing that ever happened afterward changed our minds. Storey was a good marine; when you've said that there isn't much else you can say. But escape was a long way off. We formulated a dozen plans and discarded them. It would be impossible without help from outside. But if we could make friends with some criminal due to be released soon we might accomplish something. One thing we needed was to have a man working outside in the yard. I went to Mori and told him that Storey was an expert gardener and suggested that he give him a job in the vegetable garden. That was inside the big wall, of course, but it was outside the prison proper. To my surprise, Storey was given the job. The first obstacle had been overcome. Thereafter, for several hours each morning, Storey worked in the garden. He planted peas and beans and he tended them meticulously. But we had no outside contact yet who could get us the things we needed.

Prisoners arrived daily. There was a bearded Irish-American priest, for instance. How he had survived his experiences, I don't know. On the slim chance that he may still be alive I refrain from mentioning his name. He had been stationed in a province some distance from Shanghai. Unfortunately, he kept a diary. In it he told how the Japs had taken over the territory. He had used the word "Japs," instead of "Japanese." Nothing so infuriates a Jap as to call him a "Jap." They had read the diary and just because the priest had made that

slip they threw him into jail. For seventeen months he was not permitted to take a bath. He was beaten regularly. When he came to Ward Road Jail he was in a pitiable condition. He was alive when I left, but where he is now I have no idea.

A new group of eighteen prisoners arrived, all accused of aiding the Russians in espionage work. Fewer than half of them were Russians, but all had been tortured at Bridge House and then confined in Ward Road Prison. The three ranking Russians in China were among them—Nikolai Vladimiroff, head of the Intourist Agency; Joseph Vitroff, manager of Tass, the Soviet official press service; Morris Soulevich, manager of the Union Steamship Company, which handled all Russian government shipping business in Shanghai. Whether they were spies, as charged, I don't know. They were, of course, Soviet officials, but technically Russia and Japan were not at war. That was a technicality never acknowledged by the Japanese. They hated the Russians as much as they hated us, and the feeling was heartily reciprocated.

These three Russian leaders were magnificent. Their bodies were weakened from beatings and torture, but their spirits had remained unbroken. The Russians and the others in their group were tortured by the "questioners" who had extinguished cigarettes on their bodies. Leroy Healy, an American, was with them. I counted 245 cigarette burns on his body. Alfred Rosenbaum—big, tough, impervious to beatings—was another of the eighteen. He was absolutely fearless. Rosenbaum had over 400 cigarette burns on his body, and most of the others showed about the same.

The most remarkable of the eighteen was Peter Jensen,

of Luxembourg. I know of no man in this world who ever suffered as he suffered, without whimpering. He was a big man with kind blue eyes. He hadn't been able to shave for some time, so he had grown a soft, golden beard. He looked like the Christus in a Passion Play and spiritually he was akin to the Christ. We all agreed that there was something God-like about Peter Jensen. Yet, for all his apparent softness, Jensen had been courageous enough to fight back when they tortured him. They had burned him with cigarettes at Bridge House and then, when he had lashed out at them, three Japs picked him up and tossed him from the third-story window to the stone pavement below. The fall had broken his back. They threw him back into his cell, where he lay, unable to move. The broken nerves and smashed vertebrae were centers of agony that radiated pain to every part of his body. The Japs said that he had jumped out of the window in an effort to commit suicide. He lay in his cell for two months without any medical attention. The pain never abated. Then they sentenced him to five years in jail and moved him to our prison. The Chinese prison doctors took X-rays of his back. By now some bones had knit and they couldn't do anything unless they first broke the bones which had grown together crookedly. Finally, they performed the operation and put him in a plaster cast. He lay motionless in the cast for four months. The operation had done him no good at all, but he could walk a little with the aid of two sticks. His chest was completely sunken in and his back bulged as though he were a hunchback. We persuaded him to come out with us to the courtyard. Perhaps walking would in time straighten his back. He smiled

at us gently. He knew that he never could be cured but perhaps to humor us he came out one day. There was a particularly brutal Jap guard on duty that morning whom we called Alonzo the Blank. He was a complete sadist. Three steps led from the door to the flagstones of the courtyard. Jensen reached the steps, but the effort had been too great and he sat down on the top step. Soulevich, who had sustained terrible damages to his right leg and foot shortly before the war and could only walk by using crutches, sat with him. Woolley and I walked around the courtyard, talking quietly on the one subject always in our minds—escape. Alonzo saw Jensen and Soulevich sitting on the steps. With a roar he darted over to them and gave them each a shove that sent them sprawling down the steps. Soulevich swore, Jensen remained silent, as always, but we could see the pain in their eyes.

"You come here for exercise!" Alonzo screamed hysterically. "Walk! Walk! You have to walk or get back inside."

Woolley protested angrily, and I thought for a moment that Alonzo would bayonet him, but I quieted Woolley down. We helped Jensen up and brought him inside. He never went to the yard again. How life remained in that shattered, shrunken body I don't know, and how his spirit survived is a miracle to me. Jensen never complained once. He seemed to be living in a world of his own with a spiritual strength so great that it triumphed over the most excruciating pain a body can suffer—severed nerves in the spine. Yet he lived. I doubt if he is alive today, but he was alive when I escaped.

There was one woman in the group of eighteen—a good-looking redhead who had been born in Australia. She was the

mistress of another "spy," an Iranian. The woman was put in a completely segregated cell on our level and a woman warder assigned to take care of her. Strangely enough, the Jap guards never bothered her. Perhaps they didn't like white women. As a matter of fact, I never saw any examples of rape in any of the prisons where I was quartered. It may be that the Jap guards had plenty Japanese, Korean and Chinese women of their own. It may be that they thought they'd lose face by consorting with them.

In any case, the redheaded Australian was safe enough. Her friend, the Iranian, was a bad lot. He broke every conceivable rule. They would put him in solitary and then he'd emerge as unregenerate as ever. Finally, in desperation, Mori, our chief jailer, told him that the next infraction of prison rules would result in his girl being sent to the Chinese part of the prison, where the common criminals were herded together. There she would have to sleep on the concrete deck with only one blanket in the midst of the extreme filth. Later on we did lose many prisoners and a number of wardens through typhus contracted in this section. Our Iranian friend just shrugged his shoulders and said, "So what?" Many of us felt like killing him, but that would have led to complications, to long stretches of solitary, and any possible chance to escape would be gone.

After a few months I began to notice signs of stir happiness among my fellow prisoners. Stir happiness, or stir craziness, is a form of shell shock or psychoneurosis. The men would say queer things and others, similarly affected, would nod seriously, as though they understood. Long confinement can do this to one. It never bothered Woolley or

myself, however. There was one barred window on the seventh tier of cells overlooking the high wall below, and from it you could see Chusan Road, a busy thoroughfare. It was sheer agony to watch people hurrying along that street, free to move as they wished, free to talk when they wanted to talk, free to sing. We envied the most miserably dressed coolie we saw pass by. One day I was standing there with Leroy Healy and big Rosenbaum.

"Look!" Healy said, pointing excitedly, "There goes Mrs. Vitroff."

She was the wife of Joseph Vitroff, but they hadn't rounded her up with the others.

Rosenbaum peered out through the bars and then shook his head. "No, Healy, that isn't Mrs. Vitroff. Don't you remember how nearsighted she was? Well, we couldn't see her from here."

Healy nodded disconsolately. "I guess you're right," he said.

Then I realized that my two friends had been affected by the confinement. With them it never progressed beyond the stage where they would occasionally say irrational things. Others went completely mad. Things which had been tolerable at first became pretty grim when all of the Allied guards were sent to concentration camps, to be replaced by Japanese guards. Chinese and Sikhs brought us our meals, but they were not allowed to talk to us. The food dwindled to about half what we had been given at first. George Bruce, an American newspaperman, came to Ward Road with six others from Pootung Internment Camp, where they had been discovered hiding a radio set. Bruce had a bad

heart. Due to the bad and insufficient food he had two heart attacks. After the second they sent him back to Pootung Camp and he died two days later. A decent diet, the Chinese doctors told me, would have saved him. His heart attacks were direct results of the poor food.

I had entered the prison June, 1942, and now it was August, 1943. We heard the news of our invasion of North Africa, of Sicily and Salerno, and then in September we heard that Italy was out of the war. Each of these bits of news gave us more faith, more courage. I knew that sooner or later our Navy would blast the Nip ships from the sea and I knew that some day I'd hear naval shelling. I guess we are all born with high faith in America. We don't put it into words, or even into thoughts, until we find ourselves in difficult situations. There in Ward Road Jail there wasn't a single man who ever doubted that we'd win the war. Even the flood of Jap propaganda, to which we were subjected, never caused the slightest doubt in the mind of any one.

As soon as Italy was knocked out of the war, the Italians in Shanghai were treated by the Japs as enemy aliens. A group of them joined us in prison. They were likable chaps. One of them immediately set up a barber shop and we all patronized him. He was a gay, friendly, Italian. I once asked him why his country had ever gotten into the war.

"It is like this, Commander," he said, waving expressive hands. "In peacetime in Italy it is very bad. Spaghetti, bread —very expensive. Everything expensive and wages very low. So when Mussolini want us to go to war we say, 'So, what the hell. Peace is very bad. So, maybe war be better.' But we were wrong. War was even worse."

Any time you get a dozen Italians together you're going to get some singing. Our Italians were no exception. Two of them had really fine voices—a tenor and a baritone—and they sang duets from operas. They sang from their cells, they sang in the corridors, they sang in the courtyard, but they were finally silenced by the Japs. One afternoon their singing was drowned out by ack-ack and then the dull boom of bombs. We went crazy. There were Chennault's bombers giving Shanghai a taste of real war. We pounded on our cell bars and shouted, "Bomb the bastards!" The Jap guards ran hysterically through the corridors, yelling for quiet. They were badly shaken. I was happy to notice that the Japs didn't like bombing. They are brave to the point of fanaticism in warfare they can understand and see. They couldn't fight back against planes, and that unnerved them. Afterward we heard the result of the bombing.

There was a large Italian ship in the harbor when the war began—the *Conte Verde*. She would have been a beautiful troop or hospital ship, but the Italians wouldn't turn her over to the Japs. So the ship stayed there at her buoys, with Jap and Italian guards aboard. The night before Italy was knocked out of the war and became, in effect, an ally of ours, the Italians on board drilled a hole in the bottom of the *Conte*. She turned lazily on her side and lay in forty feet of water. The Japs were furious. They immediately grabbed every Italian in Shanghai and put him to work. They were forced to labor on docks and in the shipyards adjoining the docks and they didn't like this. They knew that our bombers would be over sooner or later and that the waterfront would be the target. So they loafed on the job. They were only paid

about two dollars a month, so their lack of enthusiasm can be easily explained. Very regularly they went on strike. The Japs would then toss them into jail until they agreed to go back to work.

Meanwhile the Japs were emptying, sealing up and raising the *Conte*. After months of night-and-day work the job was finally done. One afternoon they ran up the Nip flag and had quite a ceremony aboard. That was the afternoon Chennault picked. It looked as though his Intelligence was very good. One American plane came over and dropped just one bomb. The bomb hit the *Conte* right amidships between the stacks and opened her seams nicely. Once more the ship heeled over lazily to find her resting place in forty feet of water. That was the first bombing of Shanghai.

But my chief interest was not in bombing, even American bombing. It was escape. I had spent as much time as possible with the real criminals, looking for a man who might prove trustworthy. We found a man named Jenkins (that's the name he used, anyhow). Jenkins was from somewhere in the Balkans. He had spent ten years in the prison and was due to leave pretty soon. He was in for murder. Jenkins was the kind of man who'd do anything for money. We gained his confidence by giving him some money we had smuggled in and promising him a great deal more. We had friends outside who would pay him off if he'd string along with us. Once we had convinced him of our ability to pay he was all set. It was hacksaw blades that we wanted—lots of them—and I even told him where he could get them.

Escape would be impossible without hacksaw blades to saw through the bars across the window in my cell. "But

even if I could get the hacksaw blades when I get out," he protested, "how could I ever get them in here to you?"

I explained about Storey. He had been growing beans now in the garden right smack against the wall which separated us from Chusan Road and freedom. The blades could be thrown over the wall; they'd land among the beans. Storey could bring them in to us. My criminal friend Jenkins was intrigued by the idea. Now we only had to wait for him to get out. Meanwhile we made our plans, all predicated on our eventually getting those blades.

Woolley and I discussed every detail. Storey, of course, was a full partner in our conspiracy. We knew we were gambling on a thousand-to-one shot, but we were willing to take the risk. There was always a chance of being overheard, so we did most of our planning by semaphore. We would talk back and forth for hours with our arms. Woolley in his cell and I opposite in mine. Now all we had to do was wait.

«« CHAPTER EIGHT »»

DURING the next two months Woolley, Storey and I were three model prisoners. We were like kids before Christmas, during those two long months. We were working out a plan and the more we pondered over it the better we liked it. Meanwhile we didn't want to attract any undue attention to ourselves. We saw as much of Jenkins as we could. We had every confidence that he would do his part when the time came. He wouldn't do it out of friendship for us or hatred for the Japs; he'd do it as a matter of business. Jenkins was obviously the kind of man who would rather earn a dishonest penny than an honest dollar. Over and over again, we told him what we expected him to do. He was to go to a friend of mine in Shanghai, get what we wanted, and then toss the blades over the wall. We drew a map of Chusan Road and showed him where to stand when he threw the blades over. With luck, they would clear the twenty-five-foot wall and drop among Storey's beans.

We had entered Ward Road Prison June 8, 1942. Now it was September, 1944. We had been there twenty-seven months. All of us had lost considerable weight, but Woolley, Storey and I were in fair condition. Mori was not a bad jailer. He was a weak, vacillating man, susceptible to flattery and kumshaw. I hinted to him that I had friends outside

who could get us some food and that I would gladly share it with him. Mori accepted my kindness. The escape would put a severe strain on us physically, and we wanted to be in as good condition as possible when the time came. Our bodies desperately needed some reserve of fat for the gruelling job ahead of us. We were all right for one, sharp, concentrated effort, but we would probably have to walk between 600 and 700 miles (assuming we got out of Shanghai), and it was this prospect that worried us. With Mori's connivance, I sent messages to friends outside and they didn't fail me. Soon a supply of canned stuff began to arrive. The sausages, peanut butter and sugar looked beautiful when we opened the tins. Mori, of course, got his share. This extra food helped Woolley and Storey a great deal. It came a little too late to help me, unfortunately.

There was a slight ledge which ran along the wall of my cell. It was about six inches from the floor. I could just get a toehold on it and reach my barred window. When the blades arrived I would have to spend many hours standing on that precarious ledge reaching upward to the bar. I began to practice balancing on that narrow ledge, hanging on to one bar with my left hand and holding my right hand aloft. It was a very uncomfortable position. Little-used muscles were brought into play. In the upward stretch the abdominal muscles become involved as well as the back muscles of the legs. My leg muscles were fine, but one day, as I reached up toward the bars, I felt something snap. An excruciating pain shot through my lower abdomen and I doubled up.

I slipped off my trousers and investigated. There was a sharp bulge above my groin on both sides. I knew what had

happened, all right. It was a double rupture. I had seen this often enough at sea, but never thought I'd become a victim. I knew the reason, and afterward doctors confirmed my diagnosis. The intestines are held in position by a wall that keeps them where they belong. This wall is made up of fat and muscle. Usually it's a tough, durable wall, but if you've been badly fed for a couple of years the fat thins out. In my case there was no fat and only a thin wall. Merely the strain of reaching up with my arm had punctured that wall and part of my viscera had dropped through it.

I sat on the edge of my cot, thoroughly discouraged for the first time since December 7th. This meant the end of everything. Now I'd probably rot in prison until the war was over. I let my hand slide over the bulge in my side. Curiously, the pain was gone, even under pressure. Standing up, I investigated further. I discovered that if I pressed the bulge on the right side it didn't bother me, the breakthrough on the left wasn't so bad. I tried a few steps. As long as I held my right hand against my sagging abdomen, pressing it back tightly, there was practically no pain. I didn't sleep much that night, trying to figure things out. Suppose I went to the Chinese doctors in the prison and asked them to operate. If you've been a ship's captain for as many years as I have, you learn quite a bit about rudimentary surgery. It would be a simple enough operation, and the Chinese doctors would probably do a good job. They'd just have to put my viscera back in place and sew up the hole in the peritoneal wall. But what was there to sew up? There wasn't enough tissue to hold stitches. Muscle alone couldn't do it. Then, too, I was in no condition for an operation. Oh, I felt all right, but I

was feeling with my mind these days. Considering my body objectively, as a surgeon might, I came to the conclusion that it was in no condition to weather an operation successfully. I wouldn't die, but the operation would leave me so weak that it would take weeks, if not months, to recover my strength. I decided to forget the whole business of doctors.

Now came another question. Woolley and I had agreed that a three-man team would have the best chance of making a break. Any more than that would be an unwieldy unit. A two-man team would be all right, unless one of the team was killed. It would be tough making it alone. All in all, looking at it from every angle, we had decided that three made the perfect escape team. But now, with me able to walk only when I supported my rupture, would I be able to pull my weight with my two partners? They didn't need my strength. Storey had the youth, the vitality, the strength. They didn't need my courage. Woolley had enough raw courage for a division. But they needed my tongue. It would be suicidal to walk across 600 or 700 miles of country, occupied by Japs and puppet Chinese, unless you knew Chinese well and some Japanese. The rupture hadn't deprived me of my tongue. Not that I could have translated the poetry of Li Po or the philosophy of Mencius in flowery Cantonese, but I did know my way around Mandarin dialect, which is the everyday language of about 300 million people in Northern, Western and Southwestern China. My Japanese would never have fooled Lafcadio Hearn or Tojo, but I knew enough of it to pass as a French priest, or to know what to do if a Nip sentry yelled, "Halt or I'll shoot!" Neither Storey nor Woolley knew Chinese or Japanese. Of course, I could

back out and get them a substitute, but who in hell would I get? Thinking over the list of our fellow prisoners, I didn't know of one who was familiar enough with the languages and customs to guide Woolley and Storey. So I decided to sleep on it. I've always found that to be a good idea. I dreamed that night of Rita. When I woke in the morning all my doubts were dissipated. I'd go along, rupture or no rupture. I'd go along on one leg and trust to the strength of Woolley and Storey to carry me.

I told Woolley about my accident.

"I'd never think of trying it without you, Smitty," he said in surprise when I told him of the doubts I had. "Hell, man, Storey and I would be nabbed before we reached Chaou Foong Road. It isn't your stomach we need, Smitty man, it's your brains and your knowledge of this Godforsaken country."

"I'm apt to be a hell of a burden to you and Storey," I said, still a bit on the fence, but wanting terribly to be convinced.

"Storey is a marine, isn't he?" Woolley asked. "I hear great tales of your marines. If things get bad, man, he can carry you." Which was, of course, impossible.

I felt confident now that we'd pull it off. Perhaps Woolley's faith was all I needed to give me that extra bit of confidence. I decided to write my brother Linton and tell him my plans. He would tell Rita and at least she'd know that I wasn't just rotting away in jail. I had such supreme contempt for the Japanese Intelligence that I didn't worry about revealing my plans in a letter to my doctor brother.

About a month later he received the letter in Atlanta. One line caught his eye, and he understood, as I knew he would.

"A continuous stretch, further than from your house to Sam's" meant a lot to my brother. We had only one mutual friend named Sam. That was Judge Samuel J. Murphy of Bradentown, Florida. I knew that Linton would figure out that it was a little more than 600 miles from Atlanta to Sam's house in Bradentown. Six hundred miles? Six hundred miles from Shanghai would mean freedom. My brother studied the letter which, incidentally, was passed without a cut by the stupid censor, and immediately phoned Rita to say I was escaping soon and would walk to freedom.

Woolley left the planning to me. I knew Shanghai well, of course. I knew every road of it (there are no "streets" in Shanghai) and I knew the surrounding country. To refresh my memory, I had smuggled a handy little book out of the prison library. It was called *Shanghai Dialect in Four Weeks* and it was written by two gentlemen named Charles Ho and George Fo. Whether or not anyone could learn Shanghai dialect in four weeks (or four years) is not the point. The point is that the little blue book contained an excellent map of Shanghai. I pored over it in my cell. Assuming we did get over the wall, which way would we go? First we'd have to get out of the city. If we went due north, we'd find ourselves in open country within a mile. If we turned to the right or east, we'd find the Whangpu River, which was well guarded. If we turned to the left (southwest), we had damn near the whole city of Shanghai to walk through before we found open country. For various reasons we decided to take what appeared the greater risk. There was plenty of ack-ack batteries to the east and north, and these were restricted areas where we would need all sorts of military passes.

There were main highways, well patroled, and railroads, well guarded, and the more I thought of the prospect of taking what on the map looked the easier way, the more I doubted it. Then, too, once we had escaped from the jail the Japanese would immediately think we had headed for the north, or the east, and they'd go over the flat terrain with fine combs. No one would think we'd have the audacity to walk right through the city proper. No one would think we'd attempt to walk across such well-lighted thoroughfares as Broadway or the Bund. They'd never think we'd have the bad judgment to cross the Garden Bridge over Suchow Creek and amble through the French Settlement and then head west across the tracks of the Hangchow Railway and over the Chung San Road and into the plains and hills beyond. That was doing it the hard way. In many ways it was leading to our opponents' strength but many a grand slam has been made at bridge that way and we had to make a grand slam. A little slam wouldn't help us in this game. It was all or nothing.

Woolley, Storey and I agreed on the route we would take. We memorized it road by road. Once we got out we'd do as little talking as possible. We'd have everything memorized. I wrote the route down on paper and gave Woolley and Storey each a copy to learn. They learned the names of the roads and two or three rendezvous where we'd meet in case of any unexpected separation. Then they destroyed the papers.

On September 15th, I managed to talk with Jenkins. He was about to be released, he said. He had plenty of my money in his pocket now and he actually seemed to be en-

joying his role. We repeated again and again our orders about the hacksaw blades. But that wasn't all. That was only the first part of it. When we got over the wall and into the streets of Shanghai we would need several things. We would need clothing, food, money and passes.

"Where can I get these?" he asked, bewildered.

I gave him the address of a friend. He would furnish the blades. He would furnish the food, money, clothing, and, best of all, he would furnish the passes which would give us the right to walk through the streets of Shanghai. They would, of course, be forged passes, but my friend had sent me a message saying that this would not be too difficult. It may seem fantastic that I was able to communicate with the world ouside the prison walls almost at will, but it is the truth. Every day dozens of tradesmen came to the prison. Laundry vans and food trucks were always unloading at the prison and these vehicles were allowed inside the big wall. It is a pity that I can't reveal the details of our underground, but heads would roll if I did. I can only say that we were never out of communication with friends outside. I can say that much only because since our escape I have learned that all prisoners of military rank have been removed from Ward Road Jail and now it is again a criminal prison for civilians. But in any case let's leave it at this: I was able to send and receive messages. Without that help our escape would have been impossible.

Jenkins was to contact my friend and, on the night of our escape, was to meet us one block from the prison. He would have coolie clothing, money, food and identification papers

with him. He demurred at this. There was considerable risk, it is true.

"I'll give you enough money to keep you comfortably for the rest of your life, Jenkins," I told him. "My friend will be the guarantor of this. When you see him he will give you half of the money. After you have given us the food, clothing and papers he will give you the other half. And you will be paid in American dollars. Even the Japanese respect American dollars."

"How do I know your friend will pay me the second instalment?" Jenkins asked slyly.

"He'll have to, or you can denounce him to the Japs as having aided our escape. He will be beheaded and you will be rewarded for turning him in. So you see he will have to pay you to save his own neck." I was sweating a bit at this point. If he refused now all of our planning was in vain. Fortunately, I had used the right psychology with Jenkins. Friendship, patriotism, these were just words to Jenkins, but when you put things on a realistic basis he understood quickly enough.

"We Americans have a great deal of money in Shanghai," I added. "It is used for just such ventures as ours. It is government money. My friend is an agent. It is not his own money he is handing over. It is government money. Therefore he would have no motive for holding back on you."

This all made sense to Jenkins. It was, of course, all nonsense. Actually my friends were the kind of men who said, "You can have anything we have, Smitty. We'll settle up after the war." Jenkins listened to my directions carefully. He memorized them and I made him repeat them several times.

He would meet us at the intersection of Chusan Road and Tong Shan, only one block from the prison. It was a region of small shops, all of which would be closed at ten at night. With any luck the streets would be dark and we could grab our clothes, food, money and papers from Jenkins and be on our way within a matter of a minute. We would slip the coolie clothes over our prison clothes and keep on walking. Jenkins could fade away in the darkness and live as impiously as he wished the rest of his life. Jenkins finally agreed. This venture, he felt, was quite worthy of his talents. Besides, the price was right. Quite definitely. I believed that Jenkins would not fail us, because it wouldn't pay him to fail us. He'd make much more by obeying orders implicitly. Once he had delivered the blades, he was to keep in daily touch with my friend. I didn't know how long it would take to saw through the bars. I would let my friend know the date of our attempt; he would let Jenkins know and Jenkins would be on the corner of Chusan and Tong Shan at ten o'clock that night. We shook hands on the deal and I left him, convinced that he wouldn't fail us.

Two days later he was released. Now a complication entered. Commander Cunningham had heard of our plan. How? The walls of prisons breathe secrets. The steel bars whisper and the stones of the courtyard echo as your feet clang on them. We had not included Commander Cunningham in our plans for many reasons. First of all, we were playing one of the longest shots ever played. Our chances of success were virtually nil. Now, after calm reflection, I'd say they were about three hundred to one. At the time they seemed a million to one. Storey, Woolley and I had quite

calmly and coolly decided to take this risk rather than rot in jail. We did not feel that we had the right to ask anyone else to share such a frightful uncertainty. If one out of a hundred details went wrong it meant beheading. For that reason we didn't want to involve anyone else, least of all Commander Cunningham, who, because of his rank, was being treated pretty well anyhow. Then again, we thought our plan would work only if the team consisted of three men. Four men walking down a street would be noticed; three men, two walking in front and the other behind, might not. Four men constitute a crowd. Three men? The ideal combination. Criminals know this. The most successful big-time burglaries in our time have been performed by gangs of three. Two men working—one man as lookout. Three officers can run the biggest ocean liner ever built. Three co-ordinated minds and bodies can accomplish almost anything. Three well-co-ordinated German minds almost conquered Europe. Hitler, Goebbels and Goering started it and almost made a good thing of it. There is strength in the number three. The Big Three—Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin—won a war that was almost lost. Three men once raised an ordinary baseball team to the status of champions. Remember the combination? Tinker to Evans to Chance. All of our planning had been predicated on the fact that we'd be a team of three. Three can survive when four might starve. But if Commander Cunningham wished to come along we could not say no.

Cunningham had been working on an escape plan himself with four other men. It differed from ours in detail. He had decided once he got over the wall to take his group north.

He figured they could disappear into the countryside, and eventually circle the city and head southwest, aiming in the general direction of Chungking—some 900 miles away. He did not like my plan at all. He considered it would be suicide to walk through Shanghai and make direct for the open country to the west. We stuck to our plans. Woolley could talk more bluntly than I to Commander Cunningham. As senior Allied officer he could, technically, give orders to Commander Cunningham and myself. This was an Allied, not strictly American venture and, by every canon of protocol, Woolley outranked Cunningham and myself.

"It's madness, Cunningham," he said angrily, "to think that your group of five and our group of three can escape in one body! Why, man, that makes eight men. That's an army. The very noise of them marching would wake every God damned Jap this side of Tokyo."

"Well, you three go your way; we five will go ours," Cunningham said, and that settled it.

Our discussion had something of an *Alice in Wonderland* quality about it. As yet we didn't have the blades we'd need before we could ever reach outside. Yet we were arguing hotly as to which direction we'd take once we were clear of the prison walls. I wondered for one brief, uneasy moment if we hadn't all gone stir crazy, but dismissed the thought from my mind. However, although we would split up once we hit the street, we'd all have to leave at the same time. Once the absence of one group was noticed there would be no chance for the second group ever to get away.

Commander Cunningham had no possibility of getting blades. If Jenkins ever came through, we'd all have to use

mine. I prayed that Jenkins would send enough of them. I had asked my friend outside to get six blades for Jenkins. With Commander Cunningham and his group, we'd need a good many more than six. But I tried not to worry about that. It was silly to borrow trouble. Meanwhile, we tried to persuade Commander Cunningham that what seemed the riskier might well be the easier plan. But he liked his plan and in the end we agreed that it was certainly better to split up once we were over the wall. We sweated it out, taking our morning walks in the courtyard, occasionally stealing a glance at Storey as he bent over his beans in the garden plot close to the wall.

His beans were going to be useful to us if Jenkins did his job. I remembered reading somewhere that the Greeks and Romans made use of beans in electing magistrates. Black beans meant votes against; white beans were votes for. I wondered whether our beans would turn out to be white or black. Storey had planted the only kind of beans he had—ordinary dwarf beans. However, he treated them as though they were climbing beans. With that as an excuse, he had obtained many small bamboo poles. These had been cut by the Japs into two-foot lengths and he stuck them into the ground. When lashed together these would form the pole that would allow us to secure our rope to the top of the wall. Because it was fall now, he had an excuse for asking for burlap bags to cover his beans at night. He spread the burlap over the poles at night. He didn't cover the whole plot of beans, only a fraction of it. However, if the blades dropped among the beans the burlap might help hide them from the casual view of any guard on top of the wall. We

were leaving as little to chance as possible. As Woolley had said, they didn't need my stomach; but I could contribute my brains and suggestions. So I kept my brain working. We were always just a little hungry. It was a chronic state with us, and I honestly think that hunger sharpened our wits. In my planning now I was no longer uncertain. Woolley felt as I did, and I believe that it was our hunger that made us think more clearly.

Then, one morning while taking our exercise (it was just a week since Jenkins had been released) I saw Storey straighten up. I saw him take a piece of burlap from a pole and drop it casually among the beans. Then he turned and looked toward me. He nodded slightly and went back to his beans. Jenkins had come through. I felt icily calm and, to my surprise, not a bit excited. Subconsciously I had banked completely on Jenkins. I had had a strong conviction that the murderer would not fail us. Now, at least, we had a chance.

We went back into the cell block. We always had a few minutes of rather informal milling about in the corridors. The Jap guards were so accustomed to us now, and to our apparently resigned behavior, that their supervision was slack. Storey slipped me a small package, which he had secreted down his trouser leg. I hurried to my cell. Woolley leaned against the bars of his cell, ready to warn me if a guard came down the corridor. I opened the package. There were four blades—long, slender, ten-inch blades. I looked dubiously at the bars across the window. They were three-quarter-inch hardened steel. Would these frail-looking blades be able to cut through one of these bars? I took one

and buried the others in a secret place I had prepared. I moved my stool to the window. I couldn't use the ledge very comfortably now. One hand had to support my abdomen and the other had to handle the blade. I stood on the three-legged stool and drew the file across the lower right-hand bar. There were four vertical and two horizontal bars across the window. Months before I had calculated that if I could remove the lower section of the vertical bar to the right, it would leave a space of eight and five-eighths inches by fourteen and three-quarters. This would be a tight squeeze, but by pushing the head and then both shoulders through, I thought the rest of one's body could make it. The file cut slowly but surely into the steel. I looked back at Woolley across the corridor and waved a reassuring hand to him. I intended to saw through the bar in two places, where it was imbedded in the concrete of the window ledge and eight and five-eighths inches above that, where it joined the lower horizontal bar. It would take some time to do this but time was the cheapest commodity in Ward Road Jail. I had already hidden a small bar of soap and some shoe blacking I had stolen. Once the bar was cut, I'd fill the space with soap and then blacken it. This would defy a casual inspection, and for months the Japs hadn't given us anything but casual inspections. I worked as long as I could, which was about an hour. Then my wrist muscles rebelled and I had to give up.

Every night I worked for at least an hour on that stubborn steel. The blade was a beautiful thing. Its sharp little teeth never dulled or blunted. Meanwhile, I had broken the blades in half and distributed one piece to Woolley, one to Storey, and one to each of Commander Cunningham's men. They

were to do nothing until I had filed through this bar across my window. All of us would escape through that one space. Meanwhile, there were other things to be done. We were all gathering as many scraps of cloth and clothing as we could find. On the big night, each of us would make a dummy to leave in our beds. The Jap guards were creatures of habit. One of them walked down the corridor every hour on the hour. Believing us to be thoroughly cowed, the guards never bothered to do more than glance into our cells.

I continued sawing. The steel seemed to get harder as I cut through it, but it gave. After three weeks I heard a little click and my file came right through. The bottom half of the bar was separated from its concrete foundation. Now I went to work on the top of the bar. I had to reach up for that, which wasn't pleasant, but now I was buoyed up by a hope that was tangible. It wasn't just a dream any more. I was actually doing something. I was on my way, and sharp streaks of pain in my abdomen were only minor annoyances. A week or two more and the bar hung by a shred. Three or four minutes with the blade and it, too, would be free. I carefully soaped the scars and blackened the soap.

We would make the attempt in three days. I sent out word to my friend to contact Jenkins and give him the date. The escape would have to be accomplished in perfect silence. If the night was still, a whisper might carry to a Jap guard. The sensible thing was to give orders now. I wrote out a set of plans for Woolley, Storey and Commander Cunningham. The men would go out the window in order. I studied the opening carefully. First you had to put your left foot on the small ledge. Then your right foot on the three-legged stool,

being careful not to knock it over. Your right arm would grasp the lower horizontal bar across the window. You would pull yourself up, resting the right knee on the window ledge, as you stuck your head through the opening. Your left hand would grasp the knotted sheets . . . It went on like that. Every detail was engraved in my mind. No man would have to do any independent thinking until we reached the street. He would only have to remember, "Now with my right hand I grab the rope, and then with my left hand, etc., etc. . . ." I went over the written plan with Woolley and Commander Cunningham and in general we agreed. Cunningham did not like the method I had planned to get us atop the twenty-five-foot wall. He had another method he liked better.

I had a fourth copy of the plan which I kept in my pocket, I gave the men the word to start cutting through the door bars. Each cell was guarded by a door or gate which had four upright bars and one horizontal bar. They were five-eighths-inch steel. The horizontal bar was midway across the gate. My idea was that each of us saw through one of the lower sections of one of the vertical bars right where it joined the horizontal or cross bar. The bar could then be bent back, the men could slip through the opening into the corridor, bend the bar back to its normal position, fill the small opening with soap and blacking, and come to my cell. We would all escape from my cell. We all worked on the cell-door bars during the night of October 5th. We sawed from the inside, getting the job three-quarters done. The next night, when the guard finished his usual 2100 (9 P.M.) round, the men would all hurriedly finish cutting the bar, prepare a decoy, escape, then replace the bar. Then they

would hurry to my cell, entering it through the opening I would have made in my door. Each man would bring a sheet with him.

It was while finishing this last cutting job that the first of an incredibly lucky chain of incidents happened—lucky in their outcome. The jail was in pitch darkness, as conservation of electricity was the order of the day for all of Shanghai, and the jail was encompassed in deathly silence. I was sawing away at the door bar as noiselessly as possible by sense of touch, while Woolley, from across the corridor, and I both kept watch as closely as possible in the inky blackness. I had paused momentarily to rest weary fingers and to listen, when suddenly a light flared into my startled face from not more than three or four feet away. A harsh and threatening bark, such as only Huns and Japs make when aroused, rang in my ears. It was Mori, the superintendent of the jail, making a surprise inspection. He was wearing rubber-soled shoes, and had walked right up to me without either Woolley or myself hearing him. I thrust the bit of hacksaw blade into my pocket as unobtrusively as possible and with what must have been a trembling voice asked what was wrong. With the light still steadily burning in my eyes, he said, "What is that light burning for?" Just to the right of my cell was the hangman's room, which had a wooden door—a one-way door, so to speak. Someone had turned on the light inside this space during the day and had forgotten to switch it off, and now a thin and barely visible rim of light framed the door. I explained to him what had probably happened, and that the switch was inside of the locked door. He grunted

and walked off. I don't know how Woolley felt, but the cold sweat rolled off me in streams, and I felt weak. If he had canted the light downward just a tiny bit, even a Jap would have seen the blade and would have grasped the situation.

The day of October 6th dawned. It was a chilly day, a bit overcast, which was fine. We didn't want too much moon that night. It was a long day, the longest I have ever spent. About noon I reached into my pocket to get the list of my detailed plan. I wanted to go over it just once more to make sure I had left nothing undone. I put my hands into my pockets and then froze with horror. The pockets were empty. My hands began to sweat. I tried to think. I knew I'd put that plan in my back, right-hand pocket two days before. Two days before? Then I remembered a guard throwing in a clean suit to me and telling me to throw out the suit I was wearing. It was to be washed. I had stripped it off and tossed it through the bars. I had tossed it through the bars, and perhaps tossed my head with it. I remembered with horror the things I had written. "Storey will climb the rope to the watchtower first, followed by Smith and Woolley." My head? Woolley and Storey, too, would lose their heads. That suit with its precious plan was now in the laundry down below. Did they empty the pockets when they washed clothes? Probably. The Japs were always looking for anything that was in writing. The afternoon wore on. I expected to hear the sharp clump of heavy feet on the steel corridor floor any minute. Woolley, calm as always, started talking across to me, but I couldn't answer him. I didn't tell him of the horrible mistake I had made—a mistake that might

prove fatal to all of us. I reproached myself bitterly. "They've been depending on your brain," I said over and over again to myself. "You let them down, you fool!"

It was chilly that afternoon, but I sat there on my cot bathed in sweat.

«« CHAPTER NINE »»

THE afternoon wore on somehow and we had our evening meal. Our last supper was as tasteless and scanty as usual. I finally shook off the mood I was in and just assumed they'd never find that plan of mine. After dinner there was nothing to do but wait. It seemed as though the whole prison was waiting. You could feel the tenseness and expectancy in the air. I am convinced that every man in that jail knew we were going to try to make the break that night. You can't keep secrets in a prison. As the evening wore on the quiet became more intense. Usually we whispered across the corridors to men in opposite cells, or we talked to the men in cells on either side of us. Not tonight. I kept looking at my watch. Strangely, the Japs had never taken my watch. I took inventory of what I had in my pockets. I had a watch, two snapshots of Rita and some stolen paper and a pencil. That was all. We couldn't, of course, take any food with us. We didn't have a weapon or a compass among the eight of us. If we ever did get clear and if it ever came to a showdown we'd have to depend on the good right arms of Storey and Woolley. I relaxed, thinking of those two grand men. Even if we were caught and did get the axe, well, I couldn't have picked two better men to die with. You knew they'd die well; Storey calmly, looking disdainfully at his executioners; Woolley, with dignity and courage.

And now it was 2100 (9 P.M.). Far down the corridor I could hear the steps of the guard. He was always on time. He had made his rounds on the tier above. He would walk the length of my corridor, then descend a flight of steps to the big rotunda, and, if he followed normal procedure, he'd sit in a chair and take a nap. Ward Road Prison was so secure, so completely escape-proof, that the Japs felt they didn't need many guards at night, once the place was locked up. The steps came closer. He was sauntering along slowly. I wished he would quicken his steps. I didn't want his glance to dwell too long on any of the bars. He might spot the blackened soap. But he didn't. He kept on, reached the end of the corridor, and then started down. Before his steps had died away I had my blade out. It scraped across the last sliver of steel that held the bar in place. I worked fast now. Removing one sheet and one blanket from my bed, I fixed the scraps of burlap and cloth into the form of a dummy and placed it under the blanket on the bed. Seven other men were doing the same thing, yet I couldn't hear a sound. Woolley had secured his bar in place, filled the crack with soap and then blackened it. He came across the corridor and stuck his handsome face through the space left by the bar I had sawed through. He stepped into my cell. Storey arrived a moment later. We didn't utter a word. I took two sheets from each of them and knotted the six sheets together. The day before, Storey had smuggled in a strong, two-foot length of bamboo from his garden. I tied the end of my sheet-rope to the middle of that. My idea was to catch the strong piece of bamboo between two of the bars and then let the knotted sheets drop down on the outside. The bamboo would be

horizontal; the sheet vertical. The bamboo was what we call in ships a "toggle."

Woolley gave me a boost to the ledge of the window. I pulled out the bar and that left a space slightly under nine by fifteen inches. The last man out would replace the bar in the cell door and the bar in the window, soap the cracks and blacken them.

I adjusted my bamboo toggle so that it fitted between the two vertical bars above our escape space. The knotted sheets dangled below. There was a drop of twenty-two feet to the concrete walk below. I had measured this with my eye. I had measured it every time I went into the courtyard to exercise. I had measured it perhaps 600 times and came to the conclusion that it was twenty-two feet, give or take three or four inches. The knotted sheets were twenty-two feet long. If the knots held, we'd at least get into the courtyard. Automatically, I stuck my head and right arm through the space, hunched my right shoulder through, then my left foot. I reached up and grabbed the top knot of the sheet. I swung my body and my legs out into space, forgetting about a red-hot iron that was lying just above my groin. Glancing back I saw Commander Cunningham and his men entering the cell. I swung down. The "rope" swayed back and forth a little, but I didn't worry about that. I weighed 190 pounds on December 8th, 1941. I was about 120 now. Hand over hand I slipped down the knotted sheets and then my feet hit the concrete. It was dark and there was a chill wind blowing. The moon wasn't very high yet, not bright enough to give much light.

I hadn't taken a step away from the rope when Woolley's

feet hit the concrete. Then one of Commander Cunningham's men followed. Storey was next, and now, according to plan, he ran to his garden and picked up two long strips of bamboo he had constructed by lashing the two-foot pieces together for the ostensible purpose of having a climbing frame for his beans. We crept across the courtyard, feeling naked, somehow, and very conspicuous. Woolley was carrying our rope of knotted sheets. Cunningham and his men were using their own. There was a watchtower at the corner where the walls intersected. A man stood guard there all day, but he went off duty at nine o'clock. Storey and Woolley attached the bamboo toggle to the long bamboo pole and reached it twenty-five feet above to the bars of the watchtower. They had to insert the toggle behind and between two bars, so that it would hold firmly. The long bamboo stretcher bent and swayed in the wind. We held our breath, afraid that it might break, but although bamboo is flexible it doesn't break easily. Finally, the toggle caught and we pulled the rope taut. It held nicely. Storey, the youngest and strongest, scaled up first. He went up that sheet, hand over hand, like a real sailor. When he neared the top, he grabbed the bars of the watchtower and pulled himself up to the little four-inch coping that jutted out below the bars. I went up next and almost fell back at the halfway mark. I was weaker than I thought. I hitched my legs around the knotted sheets, secured what purchase I could with my feet on the knots, and pulled and pushed myself up. Another knot—one more knot—and then Storey's strong arm reached down, he gave a tug, and I was up beside him. Woolley came up, and then, again according to plan, Commander Cunning-

ham's man followed. Cunningham hadn't liked our method of reaching the tower atop the wall. He had contrived another method with a different kind of rope made of sheets and blankets. That's why his man came up via our rope, so that he could help secure Cunningham's rope to the bars of the watchtower. Edging over toward the wall, I looked down into the street. The watchtower was semi-circular, and as long as we didn't step onto the top of the wall itself, there was little possibility that we would be seen. Less than twenty feet from the tower, that is, from the street intersection, a brilliant street light blazed.

I prayed for an air-raid alarm. It would mean blacking out the streets, but the air force was somewhere else that night. The street was crowded with Europeans, Chinese and Japs. They were mostly shopkeepers on their way home. Jap soldiers sauntered by. We couldn't drop down among that crowd without being noticed. We waited, hoping in vain for the streets to clear. The moon rose higher, and it hung like a beacon in the still, dark sky. It was the brightest moon I had ever seen. Commander Cunningham's group was having trouble with their rope. They couldn't raise it up to the tower. It was dangerous to wait any longer. We had been hanging to the outside of the tower half an hour now. We might as well make a break for it, then Commander Cunningham and his men could use our rope and toggle. I fixed our rope between two bars of the watchtower and then threw the knotted sheets over the wall. The end of the sheet hadn't straightened out before I was sliding down the rope, not bothering to slow my descent. My feet touched the ground and Woolley's feet were almost touching my head.

There were gasps of astonishment from people on the street. They stopped and looked, but no one did anything. Storey was over the wall now, and Cunningham's man was hauling up the rope so that his group could use it. I started to walk rapidly toward the right. I walked diagonally across the street, Woolley to the left and Storey went straight across. We kept our heads lowered and affected an unconcern we didn't feel. I expected someone's hand to clamp down on my shoulder any minute, but meanwhile I was gaining. Every yard away from the prison wall meant a yard nearer safety. By now, Commander Cunningham and his men should be dropping over the wall, but they weren't crossing the street; they were heading east then north along Kwen Ning Road. I was across the street and walking along the dimly lit Chusan Road. I walked a block to reach the intersection of Chusan and Tong Shan. Jenkins should be waiting here. He should be standing in the shadows on the northeast corner. He should have coolie clothes for us to slip over our gray prison garb. He should have money and food and papers. If he would be there, I felt that everything would be all right. I stopped and waited at the northeast corner. Woolley and Storey had circled and joined me. We hadn't said a word yet. There was no outcry from the prison, a block behind. That augured well. It meant that Cunningham and his group had gotten away too. The three of us waited for Jenkins to walk out of the shadows. But there were no shadows; the moonlight had penetrated that dark corner. And there was no Jenkins. We waited thirty seconds—one minute—no Jenkins. We dared not wait any longer. We had to put space between us and the prison. It was 10:35 P.M. Jenkins was to

have been there at ten o'clock. He was thirty-five minutes late. Jenkins had failed us.

"We better go on," I said. They both nodded. We didn't need many words between us. Of course, we had considered the possibility of Jenkins not appearing. If he didn't show up, we had planned to go to my friend's house. We walked along Tong Shan Road, a dimly lit street of ramshackle shops and miserable houses. We slouched along, trying to look like three tired men on the way home after a hard day's work. We circled and struck to the left, toward the river, at Chaou Foong Road. We reached Broadway (the waterfront docks) and turned right. Ahead and across the street, I saw a file of Chinese police. They stood at the entrance of the Garden Bridge, which we'd have to cross. They were stopping people at the entrance to the bridge and asking for papers. But they were on the other side of the street. We kept walking in silence. We stepped onto the bridge and kept going. All the traffic was against us. Automobiles and horse-drawn carts in the middle and people walking on the small passages on either side. The bridge is only about 100 yards across but it seemed like miles. Toward the end of the bridge, I looked up and saw a group of Jap soldiers standing at the opposite end. Their backs were to us, and I noticed that they were asking for identification papers from people coming on the bridge. We walked on, right past the Jap soldiers, who apparently thought our papers had been looked at by the Chinese police at the other end. We walked past them and mingled with the crowd on the Bund and then Nanking Road. The back of my neck was covered with sweat, but I felt strangely exhilarated. We were free! Sure,

it might be for only a minute or an hour more, but at least for the moment it was a nice feeling.

We walked on to Szechuan Road and then we made a few turns to reach my friend's house. If he was at home, we'd get the clothing, the food, the money, and the all-important papers. He had to be home. We reached his house and I rang the bell. There was no answer. I kept ringing. There was no answer and no lights showed. The door was locked. No window was open. If he were in he would have answered immediately. Perhaps they had caught up with him. This was a dangerous neighborhood for us to linger in.

It was 11:10 now. After going through a maze of small, winding streets, we reached the French Concession and passed within a block of my apartment. It was an irresistible temptation, but I fought it down. We went down Avenue Edward the Seventh to the Rue Consulate, and then to the Avenue Joffre, the longest straight street in all Asia. We followed that to the outskirts of Shanghai and into broad Amherst Avenue. It was just 1:00 A.M. We were seven miles from the Ward Road Jail and, so far, there wasn't an indication that our escape had been discovered. If it had, I am sure we would have heard the shrieking of sirens. Police cars would have been roaring down the streets. Shanghai is a quiet city at night, and any undue disturbance would have been heard by us. The perfect calm convinced us that we had successfully negotiated the first and, undoubtedly, the most difficult part of the escape. By now Commander Cunningham and his group should be in the country beyond the northern border of the city. If they could only skirt the ack-ack crews, they'd be in open country soon. We kept on

walking, still saying very little. I kept my right hand on my groin, pressing it against my bulging abdomen. We passed across the grounds of the Columbia Country Club and headed northwest. We hit Keswick Road and there, standing on the corner, was a Chinese policeman. He watched us approach and his eyes widened. We walked on. If he made a move for his gun, we'd have to rush him and maybe two of us could close in and throttle him. He wouldn't have time to pick us all off. We got closer and I could hear Woolley draw a deep breath. As we passed him, the Chinese policeman deliberately turned his head away. Why? You figure that one out.

It was 5:00 A.M. when we came to the railroad tracks. We dropped to the ground. The night had paled now, and we could see some two hundred yards ahead. It was part of the plan to observe how long a beat each sentry had. We lay there, pretty tired, and now, for the first time, I became aware of my aching feet. They were to continue hurting for many more active days. The sentry walked about 220 yards past us to the right, retraced his steps and went about 220 yards to the left. His beat seemed to be about a quarter of a mile. We crawled closer and then stopped, as he made his turn. We waited and then moved forward again, flat on our bellies. He walked slowly, casually, which meant that our escape hadn't been reported to him. Finally, we were fifty yards from the railroad track. When he had gone about sixty yards beyond us I began to crawl fast. Woolley and Storey were on my heels. I reached the tracks, slithered across, and the cinders cut my hands and through the worn cloth of my trousers so that my knees were scraped. But we

got across, crawled some twenty yards and then lay still, our gray clothes merging with the scrubby vegetation. The sentry passed and we heard his gun scrape along the ground. It was deathly still out here in the country, and when I moved an elbow and dislodged a small stone, it sounded as though all the rocks in creation had been disturbed. But the sentry kept on, and we scrambled ahead desperately to make the protection of some bushes. We huddled among them and breathed a bit easier. Shanghai was behind us. Crouching low, we hurried to put more distance between us and the sentry. We went at a stiff pace until the lateness of the hour warned us to stop. It would be light soon and we had to find a place in which to shack up during daylight. There was a small village ahead of us. We'd go beyond that, we figured, and hide in the fields. A narrow trail led to the village and we hurried along it. It was five-thirty. There was a small creek this side of the village and a bridge across the creek. We were forty yards away when I saw a Jap sentry guarding the bridge. He saw us about the same time and yelled a sharp challenge to stop. Without a word, I turned off the road quickly and landed in a rice paddy. I started to run through the rice field which was ankle deep in mud. Woolley and Storey were on either side of me. The sentry kept yelling in Japanese, "Stop! Stop!" but he didn't shoot, and then, when we were a hundred yards off the road, his cries ceased. We kept on through the mud and circled the village. Our escape evidently hadn't been discovered even now or the sentry would have been warned and instead of yelling he would have shot. So far so good. We circled the village and came into yet another series of rice paddies. The dawn had really

come to stay now, and it was a cold, cheerless dawn. We stumbled through the rice fields, and suddenly, a figure arose from the ground directly in front of us. It was an old Chinese farmer. I looked into his eyes and he smiled. There was a law that no foreigners be permitted to leave Shanghai. Any foreigner caught outside the city limits was to be executed at once. This old farmer knew that we were running away from the Japs. I could read it in his shrewd smile. He sank to the ground again to examine his rice plants. Still farther, beyond the village, we walked right smack into a very old Chinese graveyard. This, we decided, would be an ideal place to get some sleep. No one, not even a Jap, would be apt to go barging through a graveyard. The sun was rising now and it looked as though it would be a warm day. That was all right with us. We were all chilled through and wet to the knees from the mud of the rice paddies. We found some comfortable (reasonably comfortable) spaces among the graves and decided that while two of us slept one would mount guard.

"You two had better do the sleeping, sir," Storey said to Woolley. "I'll mount guard all day."

Woolley shook his hand at Storey, in mock anger. "Now that you've brought the question up, Storey, I want to give you some orders. Smith and I want no more of your God damn respect. We want no more 'sirs' out of you. I'm Woolley and he's Smitty and you're Storey, and we're all in this mess together. By now we're three hunted men and if we're caught the Japs won't pay any attention to rank. From now on we pool our brains and our strength and whatever food we can scrounge. We're three against the whole Jap army

and we'll have no more nonsense about rank. Don't you agree, Smitty?"

"I do, indeed," I said, grinning.

"And now do you understand that, Marine?" Woolley bellowed.

"Yes, sir, I do," Storey said solemnly.

I was chuckling inside and congratulating myself on having two such wonderful men with me. They were completely relaxed, ready for anything. They'd fight, or starve, or laugh, with equal grace. We were a good team and nothing that happened subsequently ever changed my estimate of Woolley and Storey.

"If we go to sleep on one of these graves," Woolley laughed, "it will make an old story come true that I heard as a child in Devon. It was about a girl who wandered back into town after a night out with 'Rest in Peace' engraved on her back."

"That was an old story when I was a kid down in Atlanta," I told Woolley.

"I think I heard it too, back in Bloomington, Illinois," Storey said.

"Well, the hell with the story, how about sleeping?" Woolley grumbled.

We slept by turns, fitfully, uncomfortably. The sun climbed high and poured down its hottest rays. This was fine, at first, for it dried our clothes and took the chill out of our bodies. But we weren't accustomed to sun. For nearly three years the sun had been a stranger to us, and our bodies had forgotten how to resist its fierceness. Our diet during those years had been quite deficient in the vitamin which toughens

the skin and makes it less susceptible to sun. We had no hats, of course, and our heads were shaven. By midday my head was a mass of blisters. I tried to find a grave mound large enough to throw a shadow, but the Chinese mounds were rounded and there wasn't much shade in the graveyard.

About three in the afternoon we heard the unwelcome buzz of airplanes. They were flying low. We flattened ourselves on the ground, thankful that our gray prison clothes and the gray stones merged pretty well. There were six planes and there was no doubt that they were looking for something, and we didn't think they were looking for the end of the rainbow. They flew back and forth, never higher than five hundred feet, and then they moved on to search another sector. Our escape had been discovered and the search was on. Well, we expected it.

When the planes disappeared, we started off again. We found a rather good trail flanked by hedges. The hedges came in handy because the planes returned. They flew low over the road and, as they approached, we dove into the shelter of the hedges. I grudgingly gave the Japs credit for smarter tactics than I had expected from them. Evidently they were covering all trails with their airplane search. This meant, of course, that sentries would be posted at intervals along the trails and at bridges across creeks and canals. If we ever got out of this cordon, it would mean a terrific loss of face for the Japs, a loss of face which would give the Chinese of the district a chance to laugh at them. By now, orders must have gone out to recapture us at any cost. I had studied the Japs sufficiently to know something of how their minds worked. They usually stuck to the rules; they went by

the book. They were tenacious in following out a preconceived plan, but they weren't elastic and could seldom 'cope' with unexpected situations. The way they defended Guadalcanal, Guam, Iwo Jima and Okinawa proves that. Their orders in each of those cases were, "Dig in and hold." They never varied their defensive tactics. Our Navy and Marines and Army, on the other hand, never repeated their tactics. Admiral Nimitz, General Kenney and General MacArthur have accomplished miracles in the Pacific fighting by using the element of surprise; outflanking and outguessing the Japs; by throwing the Jap off balance with a left jab and then slamming him in the belly with a right-hand punch. Mindanao, Leyte, Luzon—these are classic examples of the old baseball and military axiom of "hitting them where they ain't." I figured that we'd have to hit them where they weren't. That is, we'd have to avoid places where they were logically expecting us to be. They'd be looking for us at bridges and main roads and in big towns. We would avoid those and take to the fields and rice paddies. Woolley and Storey agreed with me. It would mean tough traveling, but we had no alternative.

We left the nice trail with its friendly hedges and struck across the fields. It was six o'clock now, and we were hungry and thirsty. We had had no food or drink for exactly twenty-four hours. We stumbled across three Chinese kids sitting quietly in a field. I talked to them gently. They looked knowingly at our gray uniforms. Chinese kids mature quickly. These three lads ranged from twelve to fifteen. Virtually all of their young lives had been spent under Japanese occupation. Murder, intrigue, fighting for survival—these were

routine for Chinese youngsters. Shots in the night; fugitives dashing in and out of their poor villages; neighbors who suddenly disappeared—these were part of their normal existence. They were young in years, but their eyes looked old as they surveyed us gravely. I told them that we were hungry. Could they get us some food? They chatted rapidly among themselves and finally the oldest said he would take us home. They were three brothers. We followed them to a ramshackle village less than half a mile away. We came to a poor-looking house, and the boys went inside to tell their father of our visit. The father came out and looked at us suspiciously. I couldn't blame him. Our shaved heads were badly blistered, our clothes were muddy—we didn't look very prepossessing. But the Chinese instinct for hospitality is a strong one. He let us in and I told him that we were trying to escape from the Japanese. He thawed immediately, and it wasn't long before we were eating from heaped bowls of vegetables, chicken and rice. The food tasted fresh and good. So did the tea. This was the best meal we had had in a long time. We told him that we wanted to push on, and he saw our point. There was a creek just beyond the village, he said. Yes, there was a bridge, but it was guarded by Japs. He would guide us to the creek and take us across in a sampan. We followed him trustfully. Hell, we had to trust him. He poled us across the creek and, with that exquisite courtesy that seems to be innate with even the most ignorant peasant, he wished us a good trip and left us.

We walked on through the night that was half lit by a moon. It was slow going because we avoided anything that looked like a good trail. After a few hours we gave up. Our

feet, unaccustomed to the hard traveling, were beginning to protest. The mud and water we'd sloshed through had apparently shrunk our shoes and they felt tight. Or perhaps it was just that our feet had swollen. We rested a few hours and set out again just before dawn. Within a couple of hours we came to a village we couldn't by-pass. This was a section of marshes and waterways and muddy rice paddies. They framed the village on all sides. It looked as if we'd have to walk the gauntlet of the village. I stopped at the first house and, knocking on the door, called out the conventional, "*Lao baung yu*," which means more than the literal translation, "We are old friends." The elderly farmer who opened the door took one quick look and beckoned us in. He gave us rice and vegetables and tea. He seemed to know who we were and all about us, without asking a single question. We told him we wanted to go on—on past the hills, on farther to the southwest, on beyond the Jap lines. He shook his head sadly. It would be impossible, he told us. The region ahead was teeming with Japanese patrols.

But we had to go on. We weren't far enough from Shanghai to draw a comfortable breath. He wished us a doubtful good luck and we headed away from the Shanghai area. It was heartbreaking progress. We walked two miles, only to come up against impassable terrain, heavy swamps and canals. We retraced our steps, only to reach another cul de sac. Then, again, we heard planes and flattened ourselves among the weeds of the swamp. Systematically, they flew back and forth, and we could imagine small eyes glued to glasses, looking for gray uniforms and foreigners. When they disappeared, we turned back and tried once more. It was

noon now but we kept on and finally found a trail that seemed to lead somewhere. We traveled most of the afternoon and then found ourselves atop a hill from which we could see a fair-sized village. It, too, seemed to be framed by marshes and rice paddies and canals, so we decided to chance it. If we could get only another twenty miles west, we'd hit dry ground. We crept up on the village and arrived there just before dark. I hated to take the risk of going through but couldn't think of an alternative. We went one block, two blocks, and met a few passersby who didn't give us a second look. Then we heard voices ahead and, looking up, saw a group of puppet Chinese troops, in their green uniforms, coming toward us. There were fourteen of them. There was no use running. . . .

"Say when, Smitty," Woolley whispered.

"Not a word," I growled to Woolley and Storey. We advanced toward them. Our only chance was to brazen this out. They saw us and one of them gave a shout. The others lowered their rifles so that the bayonets pointed at us. I kept on walking with Woolley and Storey right behind me. An officer was in charge. He gave an order and they approached us rapidly with bayonets fixed.

We stood still. Maybe they'd bayonet us. Maybe they wouldn't. They came within two feet of me, and the bayonets were raised to within an inch of my chest.

"It is forbidden for foreigners to come here!" the officer stormed.

"We are French priests," I said, in as priestly a tone as I could command. "Can't you tell by looking at us?"

"What business have you here?" the officer demanded.

"We are merely taking a walk," I said. "We are friends of the Chinese people. I am amazed that you are not pleased to see us."

The officer turned to his men. "What will we do with them?" he asked doubtfully.

"They must be all right," one of the soldiers said, "or they wouldn't be out after dark." Another said, "Oh, let's go on and leave them." The bayonets were lowered. The officer nodded to us and said quietly, "Good luck." The soldiers passed us, their heels clicking on the stones in the road. We walked on slowly, sweating a little, but I knew that we'd have to get accustomed to meetings of this sort. They were puppet troops in the pay of the Japanese. Did they know who we were? Of course they did. I heard later that this was one of many patrols sent out to search for us. The Japanese pay the puppet troops, but they don't own the hearts of the Chinese. One day I expect to see them turn against their masters and give us a great deal of help. We went on through the village and every step took us farther from Shanghai and Ward Road Jail.

We walked until 2:00 A.M. and then slept a few hours. In the morning the planes came over again, but they turned back about two miles short. Evidently they didn't think we had gotten this far. They were apparently combing the area where we had been the day before. If we could keep one day ahead of them we'd at least be safe from aerial observation. We slept a few hours the next day and then, late in the afternoon, started off again. Our progress was slow. I seemed to be hurting all over, literally from the top of my blistered head to the soles of my blistered feet. And in be-

tween, where my sagging guts were apparently determined to break right through the outer skin. I held them in, and we trudged on. My companions were having trouble with their feet. None of us complained. It was odd how we had griped at little things like poor food or slight chills back at the prison. Now we were really in bad shape, but we felt so good about our freedom that the thought of grumbling over swollen feet never occurred to us. All three of us had supreme confidence now that we'd make it, somehow. We were a well-knit team that thought and acted as one, and that is a wonderful feeling. I think Storey and Woolley believed that I could talk us out of a tight spot. I felt that those two could fight us out of a tight spot. I'd have felt better if we only had a couple of weapons with us—guns, knives; any damn thing at all, but all we had was the strength and hard fists of Storey and Woolley.

At dusk (this was October 8th), we hit another small village.

I knocked at the door of the largest house and called the customary, "*Lao baung yu.*" The farmer opened the door, took one look at us, whispered, "Don't talk," and beckoned us in. He lit pith lamps, the standard lighting for peasants' huts. The wick was made of heavy grass and was permeated with oil from the soy bean. Perhaps centuries before we found so many uses for the soy bean the Chinese were using it as lamp fuel as well as food.

"Are there any Japs in the village?" I asked our host.

He nodded. "In the next house," he grinned. "Lucky you didn't knock on that door. At this hour each night they have dinner there. But never mind them. You must eat."

"We'd better go," I said. "If they catch us here it will mean death to the whole village."

"Never mind, never mind," the old man repeated, chuckling. "We are not afraid of the Japs. We have had them with us for a long time. We know how to fool them."

Meanwhile, he was busy at the stove and within a few minutes he had steaming bowls of vegetables and rice and the inevitable chicken ready for us. We told him our plans. He considered ways and means of getting us away from this Jap-infested area.

"Two miles from here there is a creek," he said. "We can reach it by back trails the Japs do not use. In fact," he added, with a knowing look in his eyes, "they do not roam around the country very much at night. So many accidents happen to them. You can cross the creek by sampan."

It was raining when we finally started, a gentle, slanting rain, but its gentleness was deceptive. We hadn't gone a mile before we were chilled to the bone. This worried me considerably. We were in malaria country and an attack of the disease would be pretty annoying now. We trudged on and reached the creek. In the darkness we could find no sampans. The farmer was quite disappointed. He felt as though this was his fault. There was, however, a bridge across the creek. It was a plank bridge common in the canal-and-creek section of the region. It was "taken down" each night so that sampans could have free passage. It was "down" now. It would be put up in the morning, the farmer told us. He would send three men he could trust to put up the bridge. Once across to the other side we could travel some distance before hitting a village or any real roads im-

portant enough to be guarded. He went off and we tried to make ourselves comfortable among the reeds and marsh grass that bordered the creek. The ground was soft enough —mud is soft. But it was a bad night, and the rain never stopped falling. None of us slept much, but at least our feet got a rest.

The dawn was a very tired, gray, wet dawn, and it brought three Chinese who nodded to us wordlessly and dragged out the heavy planks. They fitted them between upright poles that had been pounded into the creek bed. We crossed to the other side and went on.

Sometimes we sank knee deep in the slimy mud. Sometimes we tripped over clumps of roots and went sprawling and arose wiping mud from our faces. But we kept going. We had expected all this. We never thought it would be easy. Of course, the rain was a handicap we hadn't quite figured on, but there was nothing we could do about it. Finally, we came to a succession of rice paddies. Where there are rice paddies there are people, and we moved cautiously. We saw one lone farmer tending the rice plants. He looked up, unbelieving, when we approached him.

"Are there any Japs around here?" I asked.

He nodded. He pointed dumbly to a collection of huts some hundred yards away which somehow we had missed seeing.

"A patrol of them there," he said, "another patrol over that way," he pointed east.

We bent over and made tracks to the west. If it hadn't been for that farmer we might have walked right into them. We lay in the rice paddies, talking it over. It looked as

though they had patrols out with the definite objective of looking for us. We decided to stay in the paddies until dusk and then try to go on. The rain, except for occasional lapses, kept beating down. Finally, we forced our aching limbs to action. We made about a mile and then saw what looked like a good-sized village ahead of us. We had to cross a small plank bridge to reach it, or even to skirt it. There was a hut close by the bridge and, as we passed it, a Chinese woman came out. We kept moving until we were shocked to a halt when we heard a voice cry out in English, "Hey, wait a minute!" The surprise struck us dumb for a moment. She laughed and said, "I worked for an English family in Shanghai. Where are you going?"

"Chungking," I said.

She nodded as though it was an everyday occurrence to meet three foreigners heading on foot through Jap-held territory to Chungking.

"If you can get by the next twenty miles it won't be so hard," she said. "Twenty miles from here you will find lots of Chinese who will be friendly. They will help you."

My heart leaped at that. If we could reach Chinese guerrillas we'd have a good chance of getting through. She explained what the country was like ahead. It was difficult but not entirely impassable, she explained. It would be easy if we could use the main trails, but she strongly advised against that. Stay away from the villages, she said, there were Japs in all of them. She was a smiling, cheerful soul and she made us feel much better. We struck off boldly now, crossed the bridge, and skirted the village. We felt that we had a definite objective. Twenty miles? That didn't seem far.

«« CHAPTER TEN »»

IN CHINA the family is about the most important thing in the life of any individual. Patriotism, as we know it, is not very common in China, except among the educated and progressive groups. One's first loyalty is to the family. It's been like that for several thousand years. The family is a clan and your first duty, transcending any duty to country or religion or fellow man, is toward that clan. Often a whole clan or family group live together in a collection of huts and farm collectively. All work is supervised by the head of the clan and he or she administers the crops and proceeds of the crops equitably. Such collective farms resemble the collective farms of Russia, except that the Chinese government does not lend tractors and other equipment to the farms as the Russian government does. But then, the Chinese government does not collect a portion of the crops harvested, either. The Chinese collectives are small autonomies completely independent of country, government or anything else. It's strictly a family proposition.

We struck such a collective just before dark on the fourth day of our freedom. It was a group of eight huts, with one, much larger than the others, set apart. Half a dozen men were busy threshing rice. They didn't even stop working when we approached. A few youngsters, fat-bellied and

wide-eyed, looked at us curiously, but the men and women kept on threshing.

"Could you give us shelter for the night?" I asked the workers.

One of them grunted, "No. No room."

"Could you give us something to eat?"

He shook his head. "We only have enough for ourselves."

There was no friendliness here. Were they puppet Chinese working for the Japs? I didn't know, but this unfriendliness meant that we'd better get away and get fast. If they were working for the Japs, one of them could locate a Jap patrol quickly enough. I said, "Let's get out of here. They don't like us," and without another word we walked off. We hadn't gone twenty feet when we heard a cry of "Wait!" I turned around and saw that the cry had come from a very fat and very old woman. She walked toward us slowly and I noticed that her feet were bound.

"Come with me," she said. "I am head of this family. You didn't understand. My grandsons and granddaughters did not want to welcome you until they knew how I felt about it. Now," she said imperiously, "you come along with me."

"It might be a trap," Woolley said, thoughtfully.

"Could be," I admitted, "but we've got to take a chance."

The old woman led us to the largest of the huts. With a wave of her hand she chased out the five or six youngsters who were in the large room.

"Prepare food and mats," she called after them. She told us to sit down. There was something magnificent about this old matriarch who ruled this clan. There was nobility in her

face, as well as shrewdness, but, best of all, there was friendliness. I sighed with relief.

"She's okay," I told Woolley. One of the great disadvantages of traveling as we were, without money or weapons or food, was the fact that we had to trust people. We couldn't bribe people, we couldn't threaten them and, because we had no food, we couldn't avoid them. Any one of the many people we had to trust as we went along might prove to be the wrong one. But I felt secure with the old woman who said proudly that she was head of the Tang clan. I told her our whole story. She laughed as I told her of our escape and how we had (so far) fooled the Japs. She wasn't just a Chinese woman—she was China with the patience and the wisdom that a thousand forbears had bequeathed her. She was quite unafraid of the Japs. They would go in time, she said simply. No one could conquer China.

"We are too old to die," she said. "We are too big, and there are too many of us."

The lovely sound of food simmering in pots, the lovely smell of food being cooked came to us from the next room. And then two women began bringing in heaping bowls of food. The old woman smiled as she saw the expression on our faces. She waved us toward the table. It was beautiful food: well-cooked chicken and bamboo shoots and pork and Chinese cabbage and hot tea. We ate and ate and ate, and the old woman sat smiling benignly, smoking a blackened pipe. She smoked the pipe with dignity and poise. Then miraculously she produced cigarettes for us. They were Jap cigarettes, but they tasted awfully good that night. Now and then she went to the door to give crisp orders. We were too

tired to care if she was giving orders to her clan to bind us and turn us over to the Japs.

"You will stay here tonight," she said, calmly but authoritatively. "In the morning after breakfast I will have a sampan man take you on your way. The country ahead is impassable on foot. Canals, creeks, swamps. You will do as I say."

I could only bow and say, "Thank you, madam." She dismissed the cooks and the women who had served the food. This would be our house for the night. She herself would sleep in one of the other huts. This, I realized, was a very great honor she was bestowing. She was literally giving us her house. There were mats on the floor and quilted blankets and, when she left us, we took off our shoes and really slept. The generosity and kindness of the old woman had done something to us. We felt relaxed and safe. We mounted no guard that night. I knew we'd be awakened if Jap patrols came this way. We were guests of the family and that entailed an obligation on the part of the family. We awoke late. The sun was already up and we were anxious to get on. But the old woman insisted that we have a good breakfast. She even produced boiled eggs and bread. Finally she bade us good-bye. A sampan man was waiting.

We lay in the bottom of the boat as he sculled along the creek. Canals and creeks and all sorts of waterways bisected each other. It would have been impossible to go through this country on foot. About ten in the morning it began to rain again. However, the night's sleep and the good food had given us a moral armor that rain couldn't pierce. Except for our feet, we felt fine. The sampan man sang as we glided

along, and life was pleasant. Early in the afternoon his sampan bumped gently against the shore. This, he explained, was as far as he could take us. From now on we would have to go on foot. There was a large village a few miles ahead. We'd have to go through it, he said, because there was no way to avoid it. It was bordered by a river on one side and swamps on the other. The village was controlled by Chinese puppet troops. We could expect no help from them, but once outside it, we would find friendly Chinese a few miles beyond.

We thanked him and struck out fast for the village. The prospect of going through the village was not an agreeable one, but there seemed to be no alternative. We had covered about six miles in the sampan, and before dark we managed to make about six more. The village lay ahead of us. We made two tentative attempts to skirt it, but our sampan man had told the truth. This village was well guarded by the amazing waterways of China. We would definitely have to walk through the place. The darkness and the rain might keep sentries indoors, we hoped. We walked down the main road of the village as though we belonged there. There were occasional street lamps, and a few shops were open. We were halfway through the town when we literally bumped into a Chinese, who was hurrying along. He raised his head, took a quick look, and said softly, in English, "What are you doing here?" That was a shock indeed.

"Just on our way through your village," I managed to say.

"Well," he hesitated, "come with me and have something to eat. Perhaps I can get you a guide."

Here we were again, confronted with the same old prob-

lem—could we trust him? Suppose he was a puppet Chinese? Suppose we just ignored him and went on? A shout from him would bring the soldiers or police quickly. We'd better string along, I decided. I nodded, and he turned and said, "Follow me." He led us off the main street and through a winding lane. His house, by the standards of the region, was a very substantial one. Our Chinese friend was a "government official," he assured us.

Woolley and Storey listened in aggressive silence. If ever I saw a more weasel-faced, untrustworthy-looking man in my life, it was this self-proclaimed "government official." I questioned Woolley and Storey with my eyes. Woolley was smiling quietly and rubbing his hands. Storey, 130 pounds of complete steel and muscle (he had lost fifty pounds), had an expectant look on his face.

"What do you think, Smitty?" Woolley said.

My two pals were dying to get into action. They were dying to hang a tangible punch on a tangible jaw, to throttle a tangible throat with their very tangible hands.

"Let's string along," I said, hoping to God I was right.

Then I pulled out my watch. It was a good watch I had had for many years. Our host's weasel face lit up at the sight of it.

"I would like to borrow money and leave my watch as security," I said. "It is an excellent watch, as you can see. Would you be interested in lending me money on it?"

"I have a friend who would be interested; he is a jeweler," he said hesitantly. "Suppose I send for him."

"Can we trust him?"

He nodded. "Yes, you can trust him, as you can trust me.

Please remember that we are Chinese. If it seems as if we co-operate with the Japanese it is only because we have no alternative. We and our families would starve otherwise."

His voice was earnest. I hesitated, and then decided to believe him. He clapped his hands and his wife appeared from the kitchen. He told her to go and fetch the friend who might be interested in the watch. Then he suggested that we have a drink. He produced some Kaoliang, a Chinese equivalent of corn liquor. As an old native of Georgia, this was my dish. I knocked off a glassful without blinking, and Woolley did the same. Like all old British Navy men, Woolley had been weaned on "pink gin" (gin with a dash of bitters). If you can handle that without choking, neither Georgia nor Chinese corn is going to bother you. Corporal Storey, however, was too young to have had the doubtful advantages of being brought up during Prohibition nor had he ever gone through the vigorous alimentary training of a British naval man. He swallowed the Kaoliang at one gulp, muttered "My God!" and then choked and spluttered. Our Chinese friend roared with laughter and Woolley and I joined. I find you can usually trust a man who laughs wholeheartedly, and I felt better about our host. Treacherous men seldom indulge in belly laughs.

While we waited for the jeweler, our host fried some mandarin fish for us. These are fine fish when well cooked, and this man knew his way around a cooking pot. There was a pot of rice on the stove and he warmed it up. That was all right, too, especially when washed down by the Kaoliang. We were feeling pretty good now, and then there was a knock on the door. It opened and two men walked in. One

was obviously the jeweler. The other was in the uniform of the police and his hand rested on the gun he wore at his hip. Woolley and Storey tautened, ready to spring. It was a bad moment. The man in uniform introduced himself.

"I am the Chief of Police," he said. "I hear you have a watch to sell. May I see it?"

He loosened his belt, dropped it, gun and all, on the floor, and then sat down at the table. I breathed easier then. Woolley and Storey edged to either side of him. If he made a move toward that gun they were prepared. But he was friendly. He really wanted to buy a watch. He knew who we were, all right, but apparently he had no designs on us. I handed the watch to him. He admired it and then handed it to the wizened little jeweler.

"If the jeweler, after examining it, says it is a good watch, I will buy it," the Police Chief said.

The jeweler couldn't open the back of the watch. Our host went to his kitchen and returned with a heavy carving knife. The jeweler inserted the point and the back case snapped off. He really seemed to know something about watches. At any rate, he examined it with what appeared to be a very professional eye. He nodded approvingly.

"It is a good watch," he said finally.

"I will give you five thousand dollars for it," the Chief of Police said.

He was, of course, talking in terms of the currency issued by the Chinese puppet local government. Five thousand puppet dollars meant about five dollars in American money. Actually, the watch was worth about three hundred dollars

in American money. But I was in no position to bargain. We needed money desperately.

"I won't sell you the watch," I told him, "but I'll pawn it. I will borrow the five thousand dollars and leave my watch as security. Some day I will return and give you back the five thousand dollars with ten percent interest. Then you will return my watch."

"That is agreeable," he said solemnly. "We will draw up an agreement."

Our host, being a "government official" had brushes and paper at hand, and the Police Chief drew up a very legal-looking paper. Our host and the jeweler acted as witnesses. The whole proceeding was done with as much ceremony as though I were buying the Bank of England. Then he handed me a bundle of notes—five thousand dollars. We celebrated the signing with another drink of Kaoliang. Storey sat this one out. The big Police Chief really thawed. He told of his admiration for America and Britain. He told us how much he hated the Japanese. He told us he hoped that we could get through and that he would furnish us with a guide to take us to a village some two days' travel where we would meet friends. We would travel part of the way by sampan. He sent the jeweler out to pick up the guide. The guide was a shifty-eyed Chinese, but he listened attentively enough while the Police Chief gave him his orders. It was obvious that the Chief was the Number One man around here.

We left at midnight, walking through the deserted streets to the waterfront, and climbed into a sampan. We took turns sculling the heavy boat. Occasionally we'd bump against the muddy bottom and stick there until we poled our way off.

But we kept going. When daylight came we hid among the marsh grass that lined the stream. At dusk we set off again. We had to abandon the water now and take to the land. Five hours of walking brought us to the village the Police Chief had mentioned. We couldn't have walked much farther. Our legs just buckled under us. Our guide brought us to the house of the Police Chief's friend. Our welcome was not exactly an ecstatic one, but the name of the Chief carried some influence and we were given three mats to sleep on and a bowlful of rice. Our guide said we could sleep all night and he'd pick us up in the morning and take us farther to another village where we might be able to contact Chinese irregulars. We sat on the floor and removed our shoes and socks. I found that both of my legs were black from the knees down. The soles of my feet were like raw beef. They had been bleeding a lot, but the blood had clotted and I was afraid to wash them lest the bleeding start again.

Storey was in fairly good shape but Woolley's feet were even worse than mine. He looked at them with disgust then reached down and plucked three toenails off his right foot. The flesh had receded from the nails and they were just hanging loose. Then we slept. We didn't feel much better in the morning. It was another dull, gray day with low clouds swollen with rain hovering low. We waited for our guide. After a meager breakfast our host broke the sad news that our guide had vanished. He was a heroin addict and had managed to get a supply of the white powder during the night. He was off somewhere, in a world of his own, a world in which he was undoubtedly an ancient emperor with a harem of two hundred and more gold than he could ever

spend. The farmer gave us general directions. He knew vaguely that there were Chinese guerrillas somewhere ahead of us, but he didn't know just where. He would, however, send a guide with us.

"Smitty, our morale is low," Woolley said. "Our feet are murdering us. Thing's aren't going well at all. Now, do you know what would help our morale most?"

". . . Scotch and water, very cold," I suggested.

Woolley nodded. "True enough. But since that is out of the question, the next best thing would be a shave and, after that, hot towels on our faces. Do you agree?"

I agreed heartily. The farmer told us that there was a barber shop in the village. No, he didn't think there were any Japs around, but one never knew.

"Let's chance it," Woolley said, and Storey and I agreed. I might add that every decision we ever made during those days was unanimous. We would discuss it and consider all angles, but we never did anything that the three of us didn't agree upon. We went down the road and, sure enough, there was a barber shop. The lone barber looked startled at this influx of customers, but he went right to work. He heated some water and soaked towels in it. Our faces were sore from the sun and wind and the rain. The hot towels soothed the raw skin. Woolley had been right; this shave did great things for our morale. I pulled out my big bundle of notes to pay the barber. He waved the money away and then winked slowly. He knew who we were, all right.

Again we set off, this time with a cheerful little guide, the son of our late, reluctant host. We walked ten miles that day, never on roads. Sometimes we'd find trails and we'd

chance them. Mostly, we struck across country. It was a silent day. I could see by the way Woolley's lips were tightly pressed that he was in agony. Storey's face showed nothing. Storey hadn't been bothered by the sun. His face was tan and, as he slouched along, he looked for all the world like an Indian, with his high cheekbones and aquiline nose. We stuck at it until nightfall and then we hit the village our boy had been aiming for. On the outskirts of the village there was a farmhouse larger than most and with an air of friendliness about it. I can't explain exactly how a house you've never seen before can appear "friendly." I can't explain why Storey, Woolley and I looked at each other and smiled happily. But this house had that effect on us. It was immaculately clean and it was painted. The "windows" were glazed yellow paper and lights from inside threw a soft glow. We knocked on the door, our guide said a few words to the man who opened it, and then we heard the words, "You are welcome."

We walked in and found ourselves in the midst of a charming and delightfully friendly family. There were a husband and wife and two children, fifteen and sixteen. The two youngsters, at a word from their mother, hurried into the kitchen. The father, a man not more than forty-five, took one look at us, and perhaps seeing the overwhelming fatigue that had gripped us, hurriedly brought out a bottle of Kaoliang. We sat down and drank it gratefully. Even Storey managed to get it down without choking. I told the farmer our story. We wanted to contact the Chinese irregulars. It was like pursuing a mirage, I explained. We kept following it, but somehow it seemed to elude us.

"From now on you will be well directed," he said smilingly. "You will please leave everything to me. It will be difficult, yes, but you do not look like men who mind difficulty. You see, I know something about you. Yes, indeed," he laughed at the astonishment on our faces. "The story of your escape has reached even our humble village. The Japanese are very angry. They have offered a reward for information leading to your capture. A huge reward," he said. "There are perhaps some few Chinese who would accept such money," he added bitterly, "but not many. But you must eat and get plenty of sleep and perhaps bathe your feet. You still have some distance to go to Chungking."

We sat at the table after dinner, talking, and sometimes his sweet-faced, shy wife joined in. We felt very much at home with this family. This, somehow, could have been an American family taking in three strangers who had lost their way. We slept well that night. Not even the agony of our aching feet could keep us awake. We left early in the morning. I tried to pay the farmer for the night's lodging, but he smilingly waved the money aside. The whole family gathered outside to see us off. Their cheering "good lucks" followed us. Walking was painful that morning, but around noon we reached a river. The guide the farmer had furnished told us to wait. He would be back. He was back within a half hour with a sampan and a sampan man. He took us about ten miles and then said that he would have to leave us. There was a big town ahead, he said, and a garrison of puppet troops and Japs stationed there. We could not circle the city. He could not take us in his sampan, because all sampans were being stopped and searched.

"They are looking for you," he added shyly.

If we got through the town, he said, we would probably meet the Chinese guerrillas. Once again the mirage was traveling faster than we were. I wondered if we'd ever catch up with it. We left the sampan and tried to skirt the town. The waterways were just too wide and deep to wade. There were large canals with bridges across the locks, but these were guarded and we avoided them. We had to strike boldly through the town. It might possibly be the last barrier. We were banking heavily on the guerrillas. We entered the tired-looking town. Passersby threw curious glances at us, but no one spoke to us and no one tried to stop us. We were on the left side of the street. Ahead and across the street to the right we saw a rather disturbing sight. There was a large building and from it flew the yellow-and-blue flag of the puppet army. Sentries stood outside with their guns at their sides. We hadn't seen a single Jap, although this was a garrison town. We kept on walking. It wouldn't do to turn around, and there was no side street into which we could slip. We kept walking, feeling as though the eye of every sentry was on us. It should be remembered that even during "normal" times foreigners (whites) are totally unknown in most of this area. For several years all travel by Europeans had been prohibited outside the very largest cities, and the very fact that one was white was its own warrant for arrest. We passed the building and the danger was over. On we went through the town, and finally the shops disappeared and the houses thinned out. We were approaching the outskirts and quickened our steps. Just as we were about to leave the town we arrived at a street intersection. A soldier

in the uniform of the puppet Chinese army stepped out of a house as we reached the corner. Our eyes met. My legs stopped of their own volition. Woolley and Storey stopped beside me. I looked directly into the eyes of the Chinese soldier. There was no expression on his face. He drew himself up smartly and saluted, turned on his heel and walked rapidly away from us.

«« CHAPTER ELEVEN »»

LOOKING back over the past few chapters I find there is something missing. I don't think I have made Woolley and Storey emerge as individuals. Yet this is a fault I cannot correct. Were this a piece of fiction, I could repeat long conversations we had and thus, through their words, make them live. I could put down their thoughts. But we held no long conversations. From the time we left my cell we did very little talking. We weren't three individuals. We were a unit, bound together in an emergency and ready to act as if by a single instinct. In any case, we didn't talk much now because all three of us were suffering badly. Our long years in prison had sapped our strength more than we had realized. Our long periods of silence in prison had broken the habit of making casual conversation. Storey was a rather phlegmatic chap. Woolley was a wonderful type of Britisher—a man in every sense of the word, and a gentleman in both the British and American sense of that misused word. As mild-mannered a man as ever slit a throat (Jap), he combined gentleness and good humor with an absolutely rigid sense of honor and tenacity.

It had rained part of every day since we left and the rain had further weakened us. At this stage all of us were on the verge of physical breakdown and we knew it, though we

didn't speak of it. The thought of the great expanse of country through which we'd still have to pass was always in our minds. And so we didn't waste our precious energy in idle conversation. We knew each other as well as men could, under the circumstances. I couldn't delve into their antecedents and their early lives and thus present a background which might give the clue to what made them both so fine, because we didn't talk about early lives or families or training. We talked of trails and waterways and how to obtain food with a minimum of risk. Now and then we talked of our feet which were giving us plenty of trouble, but we talked of them objectively. We were engaged in a hazardous enterprize and a slip on the part of one, a physical weakness that might lay one of us low, would quite conceivably result in disaster for all three. We were all too engrossed in thoughts of self-preservation to indulge in such conversations as three men in ordinary circumstances enjoy. We did no joking and very little laughing. We were three men in combat and when you're in combat you have no time for even vagrant, comforting talk.

For instance, we had just gone through a town occupied by Japanese and Chinese puppet troops. It had been an ordeal which left us rather limp and tired. But we couldn't stop to cheer each other with congratulations. Nor could we lie down for awhile to rest and prepare ourselves for the next emergency. We had to keep going and forget the blood that sloshed around in our shoes. I had to forget my hernia and chills. Self-pity was a luxury we could not afford right now. We always felt as though the pursuers were right behind us. We had to keep one step ahead of them.

This had been a long day. Somewhere in the area there had to be Chinese irregulars who would help us. We knew that they ambushed Jap patrols and convoys. In the absence of a guide we'd have to find a friendly Chinese who might put us on the right track. I was feeling much more confident now about the Chinese. It seemed apparent that very, very few of them had fallen for the Japanese Greater Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere nonsense. Some gave lip service to the Japs because to do otherwise would mean starvation or death. But they were still loyal, and they hated the Japs. Their hatred for the Japs was far greater than any nationalistic feeling they had for China. They were loyal to their families and to their land. The Japs were invaders who had infringed upon the rights of their families and had taken their land. For this they hated the Japs and because of this they would fight. I've said that they felt no patriotism in the sense that we understand the word. However, their love of family and of the land they tilled is perhaps patriotism reduced to its most simple and fundamental terms. This all added up to the fact that we could trust the ordinary Chinese farmer not to betray us. That is why I didn't hesitate when we came to a sturdy farmhouse. I went up and knocked boldly at the door. Very few Chinese farmhouses had doors. They had a swinging screen that could be secured from inside and would keep out the rain. But this one had a door and I knocked loudly on it. There was no answer from within. Evidently the family was out tending the rice paddies. We stood there, undecided, and two old women came down the road. They looked at us curiously and then both of them smiled. I decided to go the whole hog with them.

I told them that we were trying to join up with the Chinese Army—any Chinese Army, be it the Chungking Nationalist Army, the Communist Army or just roving irregulars. It developed that these were two sampan women. They nodded thoughtfully and one of them said she could take us to a tea house not far away where Chinese soldiers occasionally gathered. At last it looked as though we might catch up with the mirage. We followed the two women to a narrow river.

We climbed into a sampan and rested in the bottom. The two women took turns sculling. We went downstream about three miles and there on the bank was a rather large tea house. There was no village close by. Evidently this tea house was for the use of transients going up and down the stream. The two women nodded and smiled. They pointed to the tea house and one of them said, "Go in there and tell them who you are."

I tried to give the two women one thousand of my puppet dollars. They smilingly waved it away. I hadn't been able to get rid of a single dollar since I pawned my watch. We heard a babble of voices from the tea house. We walked in and the voices stopped. About twenty men were sitting at tables, drinking tea. They put their cups down and looked at us. Each man had a pistol hanging from his belt. A dozen of them dropped their right hands to their guns. I have never seen a more unfriendly collection of faces. I swallowed hard and led Woolley and Storey to an empty table. The silence lay heavy in the room. A waitress came to the table and in a very antagonistic voice asked us what we wanted. This, I thought, was the time for boldness. If these men were

puppet troops and we had walked into a trap we were finished anyway. If they were a roving group of bandits they could have our money, but a bold approach might save our lives. If, on the other hand, they were Nationalist soldiers or a guerrilla band they might accept us.

"We are escaping from the Japanese," I said loudly. "I am an American naval officer. My friend here is a British naval officer and here is an American marine. We want help to escape."

The silence was so heavy now that you could almost taste it. No one said anything, and I wondered whether my Chinese had failed me. They all seemed to have an air of watchful waiting about them. Finally one of them detached himself and sat at our table.

"Are you interested in Chinese literature?" he asked.

"Am I what?" I exploded, thinking I had misunderstood him.

"Are you interested in Chinese literature?" he repeated solemnly. Perhaps this was a password. If it was, I didn't know the answer. I shook my head. I repeated that I had been a Shanghai pilot and before that a Yangtse River captain, but I really didn't know much about Chinese literature. The whole room listened attentively. The waitress brought tea and sweet cakes which we wolfed. There were a few chuckles then. Finally the man who sat with us said that we must wait. The "Honorable Gentleman" would soon be here; even now he was on his way. The "Honorable Gentleman" was apparently the leader of this band. We sat there uneasily. Once or twice I asked questions but received only blank stares. They acted as though they didn't understand

me. I couldn't get a hint. Four of the men drifted out of the room, either to guard the entrance if we tried to make a bolt for it or to contact the "Honorable Gentleman." We sat there for about half an hour, a long half hour, and, except for occasional low murmurs, the uneasy silence persisted. I thought I understood now. The leader would hear our story and they would take their cue from him. Finally he arrived, a calm-faced, thin man with a gun and a belt of bullets slung across his shoulder. The four men who had left evidently had stopped him and told him our story. He asked me to repeat it. I did and he nodded slowly.

"We, too, are enemies of the Japanese," he said. "We will help you. We will send you to friends some five miles from here. They will send you on farther."

Smiles from all over the room replaced the suspicious, uneasy looks. The chief gave quick orders. Two men departed and the chief told us to follow them. They were sampan men. I tried to pay for our tea and cakes but again found that my money was not wanted. We got into the sampan and went downstream about two miles. Here was another tea house with six or seven men who looked at us with hostility. Our sampan men engaged two of them in rather a prolonged conversation, too low for me to catch. We were transferred to a second sampan. No one said anything to us. Evidently we hadn't been fully accepted as yet. But they sculled down the river another three miles. A soft rain kept falling. Then the sampan turned toward the bank. One of the sampan men said, "There is a Japanese patrol just fifty yards from the bank of the stream. We will put you off here and you can join the patrol."

I looked up sharply. His face was impassive. I whispered hurriedly to Woolley and Storey. Both arose from where they had been lying and knelt in the bottom of the sampan, keeping their heads from showing.

"If you put us off here," I said fiercely to the sampan man, "the Japs will get us and behead us. You cannot turn us over to the Japs."

"But they are your friends. Don't you want to join them?" he insisted.

"We are friends only of the Chinese," I said, trying to figure out this new complication. "If you can't take us farther drop us off on the other bank and we'll make our way through those rice paddies."

"All right," he said, and then he laughed. "We will not put you ashore. We will go on to the house of a very honorable gentleman."

I was still puzzled. What in hell was this all about? Were these men for us or against us? I didn't know. It was dark now, a miserable, rain-swept evening. Finally we reached our destination. We had no idea what that was to be. For all we knew it might be a Jap garrison. But it wasn't. It was a large house, set back some thirty yards from the bank. Lights glowed inside. We trudged wearily up the slope. A young man opened the door.

"My father is waiting for you," he said politely.

We blinked a bit at that. This flight of ours was beginning to have too many characteristics of a bad movie melodrama. We stepped into the well-lighted room and blinked again. This was no farmer's house; this was a home. Everything was immaculately clean. There were straw mats on the floor and

good prints on the wall and a fine oil lamp hung from the ceiling.

"My father," the young man said, bowing respectfully. There, seated at the table, was a magnificent-looking man. He arose with dignity and smiled a welcome. He had a long white beard and white hair and he was dressed like a well-to-do Chinese.

"You have been a long time arriving," he said simply. Suddenly that scene from the picture *Lost Horizon* flashed into my mind—the scene where the travelers arrive at Shangri-la to be welcomed by the old abbot who was expecting them.

"You knew we were coming?"

"Oh, yes," he said casually. "We've had you under observation for three days now. We had to be sure of you, you know. You'll pardon the deception practiced by the sampan men, I hope. That was a—shall we say—final test. If you were not what you appeared to be, you would have signified your willingness to be put ashore with the Japanese. Actually, there were no Japanese there. But sit down." He clapped his hands. "Your feet are in bad condition. You must rest and have food and something to drink."

Two soft-footed women servants came into the room with bowls of food. Woolley sank down into the luxury of the soft cushions on the floor and, for some strange reason, breathed his thankfulness in French.

"*C'est merveilleux,*" he murmured.

"*Ah, vous parlez Français?*" our host asked in delight, and he and Woolley chatted happily for awhile. I had completely forgotten that this was one of Woolley's accomplishments.

Finding a Chinese in the interior of China who could speak fluent French is like finding an ice-skating rink in the Libyan desert. Our host produced a bottle of Chinese white wine. It had been made by the monks, he said.

"It's quite old," he said, and wiped the dust off the bottle.

"It's as old as it's going to be," I murmured.

We ate and drank and talked. We told him our story and then he told us his plan. There was a force of Chinese Nationalist soldiers not far away. The men we had seen at the tea house were part of this band.

"They are naturally suspicious," he said. "You see, many of them have been prisoners of the Japanese. Many of them have been tortured or have seen their families tortured. If they are caught bearing arms they will be tortured and killed. This makes them especially careful. They are suspicious of foreigners, too. You might have been agents hired by the Japanese to locate their headquarters."

"I promise you we are not," I said sleepily.

"We know that now. As I said, you have been under observation for some time. You will sleep tonight and in the morning you shall be taken to the headquarters. I wish you could stay here for a few days to rest but, unfortunately, the Japanese visit me occasionally and it would not be well for them to find you here. I think they suspect me a little, as it is."

"You work with the Chinese Army?" I said.

"One does what one can," he shrugged. "I am old. There is very little I can do. But now and then when the Japanese come here and drink my old wine they get very talkative. Sometimes they say things which are not discreet. Some-

thing about troop movements, perhaps. Or about an attack on a town. Such information can be valuable to our soldiers." He puffed contentedly on his pipe and through the smoke I saw his eyes twinkle.

"It sounds like a dangerous business," Woolley said.

"Oh, well . . ." He waved his right hand gracefully in a deprecating gesture. "But the mats are ready. You must sleep. Do not worry. There will be men on guard all night. Anyhow, it is a dark and rainy night, and the Japs seldom prowl on such nights. When they do, there are often accidents."

The two servants cleared the table. Three thick soft mats were laid on the floor and over them very clean comfortable-looking *pukai*, heavy quilts.

Just before I fell asleep, I asked Woolley, "What date is it? I've forgotten."

"It's October 12th, Smitty, and all is well," he said sleepily.

"I make it October 11th," I mumbled.

"It's one in the morning of October 12th. Go to sleep, man." And I did. We left early the next morning. We got into a sampan and were discouraged to find that we were going upstream, retracing our steps. We hoped that the sampan men knew what they were doing. Apparently they did, for about noon we stopped at a small collection of farmhouses. A half dozen guards with rifles looked at us without curiosity. A good-looking English-speaking officer was in charge. He smiled a welcome until he glanced down at our feet. Our shoes were quite useless now. They hung in shreds. They had been cheap, prison-issue shoes to begin with, and the rain and mud had reduced them to pulp. Our bleeding

feet showed through the holes. He called hurriedly for a medico who stripped the remnants from our feet, bathed them and painted them with mercurochrome. He had no other medical supplies, he apologized, but when we reached headquarters we would be well taken care of. This was merely an outpost guarding the stream. At dusk we would push on. We had a good meal and rested during the afternoon. These soldiers were friendly but not very talkative. Around four o'clock we started our trek to headquarters. We walked barefoot, in single file. Occasionally the leader would hold up his hand and we would freeze into immobility. The twelve soldiers with us evidently knew this country. We avoided roads, kept to the trails and sometimes took short cuts across the open country. It was a dark night. Every few moments one of us would stumble, but we'd try to repress our curses and grunts of pain. I remember counting the falls. I fell forty-two times and then gave up counting. The clods concealed by grass cut our feet badly. Hidden vines would trip us and send us sprawling. The soldiers would help us up sympathetically, but there was nothing they could do to ease this trip. It was imperative that we get out of that neighborhood. In one fall my knee cracked against a rock. The skin burst open and a cascade of blood spouted and ran down my leg. Woolley was in equally bad shape. Storey, imperturbable, was standing it better than either of us. I could no longer bend my knee. I had to walk stiff-legged. My groin was alive with pain and my feet were just a mass of agony. But we had to keep on. We walked four hours without a rest. The rain never stopped. The red earth underfoot was slimy. Just when we had about reached the end of our strength we

heard a sharp challenge ahead. It came out of the darkness, sharp and crisp. It was answered by our men. This was headquarters. We stumbled into a clearing. There was a large farmhouse and several smaller huts. The next few minutes were just a blurred confusion. We were led to a hut, and eager, friendly voices talked to us. There were *pukais* lying on the floor. We sank exhausted on them. They suggested that we eat. We shook our heads. We only wanted to sleep. In sleep our agony would be forgotten. We were so thoroughly exhausted that even the pain couldn't keep us awake. And then it was morning. They brought us bowls of steaming rice and vegetables. A doctor, this time complete with equipment and drugs, came into our hut.

"First, a hot bath," he ordered. The discipline here was wonderful. Within four minutes soldiers came bearing huge tubs filled with steaming water. The doctor helped me hobble to one of them and I sunk in. I don't think I've ever had that feeling of luxury and well being that crept over me as the water soaked into my body. It made my feet sting like the devil, but that didn't bother me. I could have stayed there all day but soon the doctor smilingly ordered me out. He laid me on a *pukai* and went to work on my feet. He gave me an injection of penicillin. He sprinkled sulfa powder on my bleeding knee and bandaged it. There was nothing, he said, he could do about my hernia. I'd have to get fattened up before that could be operated on. Finally he was through and then he went to work on Woolley. He pulled off two more of Woolley's toenails and then disinfected his raw, bleeding toes. We lay there, finally feeling clean and really secure. The commander of the force, Captain Wang, came

in to greet us. He was a lean, wiry man with a pleasant smile and he talked excellent English. He seemed really glad to have us with him. We had to repeat the story of our escape from the jail. He relished it enormously. From now on, he said, he would take charge of us. It was a wonderful feeling to be suddenly relieved of responsibility. Then he explained just how his underground movement worked.

"Technically, of course, the Japs occupy this whole region," he said, "but we have never admitted their domination. They have put puppet mayors, magistrates and councils in every village. We have a duplicate local government in each village and it is our government that the people obey—even the puppet mayors who, more often than not, are our men, anyhow. We have our own tax collectors. The farmers all give us a portion of their crops. Quite willingly, believe me. And we get a great deal of information from people in the villages. The Japs occasionally confiscate quantities of food from the farmers, load it on sampans, and we find out the route those sampans will take."

"And then?"

"And then we eliminate those Japs and take the food," he laughed. "We get arms the same way."

"Do you owe allegiance to Chungking and Chiang Kai-shek?" I asked.

"Well," he hesitated, "of course technically we are under the Chungking government. But we are so far away from Chungking. It is difficult for Chiang to get arms and ammunition through to us. We are pretty much on our own. I suppose you'd call us an autonomous army. Our General,

you will meet him later on, is our chief. Being so far from Chungking, he must make his own decisions."

"We always believed in Shanghai that all resistance in this part of China had ended," I suggested.

"The Japs would like to believe that and would like the rest of China to believe that," he laughed. "But they are quite wrong, and they know it. The war is not over. We never surrendered or came to any terms with the Japs. We harry them, snipe at them, ambush them, blow up bridges they use, block roads. We do not offer them open battle. That would be silly, but we hurt them badly in every other way. The morale of the Jap soldiers here is very bad. They never get an easy night's sleep. They want to go home. In the beginning they actually thought they could get China to co-operate, to accept the inevitable. Now, although they cannot see our strength, they feel it.

"I regret to say," Captain Wang frowned, "that we must leave this camp tonight. I would rather you could have two or three days rest. But our trip will be chiefly by sampan and will not be too difficult. First, however, I will get you clothing and shoes."

The makeshift shirts and trousers didn't fit very well, but they were clean. The shoes were too large. It was hard even to hobble the three hundred yards to a canal where there were sampans waiting. The whole detachment of some forty men went along with us. It was dusk when we left and midnight when we arrived. This was a village and we were received with cries of welcome. We walked quite openly into the village, the soldiers laughing and waving to friends. Captain Wang noticed my look of surprise at our open entry.

"We have guards all over," he said. "If any Japs approach we will have plenty of warning. Our Intelligence," he assured us, "is surprisingly good."

We rested here for two days. Even though it rained, we didn't care. We spent most of our time sleeping on soft straw mats. We just wanted to keep off our feet. The doctor tended them solicitously. He worried more about my knee than he did about my feet. It was very stiff and he thought it would be some weeks before I could move it. But Captain Wang vetoed his suggestion that we rest. We were "hot" he said. The Japs knew we were somewhere in the region and were making every effort to find us. The reward had been doubled in the past three days. He wanted to get us farther away. In fact, he wanted us to leave this very evening. We would leave by sampan. He gave us $6,000 in puppet money.

"Later, you will hit some large towns where you can buy decent clothing," he said. "I am assigning two men to take care of you. Tong—Chao . . ." he called. Two of his men came hurrying. They smiled broadly, highly pleased that they had been given the job of guarding us. Tong was tall and lanky with a rather stern face. Chao was short, a smiling, gentle sort of person.

"They are two very good men," Captain Wang explained in English. "Both of them are killers and absolutely fearless. Tong was caught by the Japs. They tried to get information out of him by torture. Notice the scars on his face. They finally bayoneted him and left him for dead. But Tong is very tough. He crawled away and we fixed him up. Chao looks gentle, but do not be deceived. He has killed a great many

Japs. Before he joined us he was a farmer. He went to town one day to sell some rice. When he returned he found that the Japs had burned his house to the ground. In the ruins he found the bodies of his wife and three children. Chao does not like the Japanese," he added simply.

"In addition to being killers, they are both very intelligent," Wang said. "They are my couriers. I send them frequently through the Jap lines to deliver messages to the General. They are bringing some papers to him now. You can depend upon them absolutely. You will have to pass through the lines, you know. Once beyond you will be taken care of by our regular main force." Then in Chinese to the two men, "Take good care of my friends."

Tong and Chao nodded cheerfully. They were still smiling at dusk, when we took off. We had a fine sturdy sampan. There was a loose board in the bottom and Tong raised it, put his precious papers under it, then replaced the board. They handled the sampan beautifully. We went on steadily down the canal. About every hour they would pull into the bank. We would wait and soon from the darkness there would come a soft voice. I marveled at the organization of this underground. Men were stationed at definite intervals all along the canal. They knew just where the Japs were at all times. We went on until midnight. Then the rain, which had been falling gently, began to come down in torrents. It was impossible to see twenty feet ahead. Tong and Chao sculled the sampan into the bank and said that we would stay there until the weather cleared. We would sleep in the bottom of the sampan. Tong and Chao would alternate watches. We covered ourselves with burlap bags and huddled

miserably in the bottom of the sampan—but we slept. I was awakened by a pressure on my shoulder. It was Tong.

"Listen," Tong whispered.

The rain had slackened and the night was still. I heard voices talking Chinese. "They came this way," I heard. "They must be somewhere around . . . The Japanese on the other banks will find them if they land on that side."

These were obviously puppet troops. Tong was reaching for the papers under the loose board. He tore them into small bits and dropped them into the water. He dropped his gun and knife over the side and Chao followed suit.

"You three must leave," Tong said. "There is a city ahead. You must circle it, reach a certain point and then cross the canal above the city. Then come downstream again and we will meet you tomorrow just one mile from here."

"Suppose they catch you?"

Tong chuckled. "We are just two stupid sampan men. They will not bother us. You will have a long nasty walk, but it is the only safe thing to do. It is a roundabout way of joining us but the direct way would not work."

I repeated what Tong told me to Woolley and Storey. They nodded. We had complete confidence in our two bodyguards. They were professionals. They had done this sort of thing again and again. We stepped carefully on to the slippery mud of the bank and headed inland. We could still hear the voices some sixty yards away, but they grew fainter as we walked away from the bank. It would have been hard to make our way in daylight, but in this darkness we kept bumping into trees; we kept slithering over the greasy mud and sprawling full length on the ground. But we kept

on going. We came to the outskirts of a city about dawn and then went beyond it to the open country. Now we would have to cross the canal. It was still too early for any sampan men to be up and about, but there were plenty of boats on the bank. We slipped into one of them and sculled across the narrow canal. No one seemed to be awake but the birds. Our clothes and our faces were caked with mud. We made a wide detour through rice paddies and fields. Occasionally farmers would look at us curiously, but we met no one else. We walked very slowly. My left leg was absolutely stiff. We got beyond the city and then turned to find the canal. We had to stop every hundred yards so I could rest my leg. I had great faith in the sulfa powder the medico had sprinkled on it, but it was bleeding badly again. Woolley was suffering miserably too. Storey's face was like granite.

About three that afternoon we reached the canal. As far as we could judge we were about a mile from where we had left Tong and Chao, and on the opposite bank. We huddled among the bushes that lined the canal and then, as though Lady Luck thought it was time we were given a real break, a sampan came sculling slowly along close to the bank and there was tall lanky Tong handling the sculls. Chao was forward, acting as lookout, I guess. I called softly and Tong deftly shot the sampan to the bank. We climbed in and lay gasping on the bottom, like three fish. The sampan kept on. After two hours, Tong said gently, "I think it is safe now. We are through the Japanese lines."

"Hell, we never saw any Japanese," Woolley said.

"There were plenty of them around," Tong said. "We

passed by their last machine-gun emplacement a half hour ago."

"Machine-gun emplacement?"

"Oh, yes," Tong said casually. "We passed a dozen of their machine-gun emplacements last night and today. They guard this canal very well, but they wouldn't think of wasting bullets on two sampan men like Chao and myself."

Chao roared with laughter. "Two poor sampan men," he repeated. "Two poor sampan men."

It was after dark when we arrived at a good-sized town. We were beyond the Jap lines and were now in part of a pocket still controlled by the regular Chinese Army. We saw men in the uniform of Chungking walking freely about the streets. It was a strange sight.

"It looks like we've made it," Storey said happily.

"I won't believe it until we reach Chungking," I said.

"You're a Goddamned pessimist, Smitty," Woolley laughed.

"There are a lot of Japs between here and Chungking," I said.

Tong and Chao led us to the largest house in town. This was the magistrate's house. He greeted us courteously, gave us food and a room to sleep in.

Magistrate Yang was a friendly soul except when he got on the subject of the Japs. Then his eyes grew cold and his hands clenched. We sent a telegram to Chungking to let American headquarters there know that we were out. The telegram was given to a runner. He would make a three-day trip to another city which actually was in telegraphic communication with Chungking. After a good night's sleep, we

were off again with Tong and Chao. We traveled two days and then came to a city still in Chinese hands. Once again we were taken to the magistrate's house. This was Magistrate Tai, a scholarly man who talked excellent English. We spent the night and he gave us a guide and suggested that we go shopping. This was a luxury none of us had enjoyed in some years. We bought clean underwear and shirts and after we'd bathed and shaved and dressed we began to feel almost human—except for our feet. The magistrate had three Chinese scholars as his guests. All of them were officials of what was the equivalent of our OWI. In civilian life all three had been writers and philosophers. Our first meal with Magistrate Tai was memorable. We were uncomfortable at first because Tong and Chao insisted upon standing in back of our chairs. Wang had told them to guard us at all times. They took this order literally. But the smiling magistrate didn't mind. In fact, he praised Tong and Chao for their devotion to duty.

The Japs had once occupied this town, the magistrate told us, but had been driven out. Now they were headed this way again and he did not think the town could be defended. However, the thought didn't seem to worry him. One of the philosophers, a patriarch with a fine white beard, looked like pictures of Confucius. He talked gently and soothingly and the others listened with great respect. His English was flawless. So was his French. When I remarked at his fluency, he smiled and said it was quite natural for him to speak French; after all, he had been educated at the Sorbonne. He was the author of several books and he and the others chatted about American philosophers like John Dewey and Santayana.

Their knowledge of American literature was amazing. We ate fine food and afterward had excellent brandy. Two drinks of it went right to my head, but I noticed they also went to my feet. The pain was negligible. I had a third brandy and the pain almost disappeared. We discussed this strange phenomenon with the three scholars. They laughed and said it was quite in accordance with their philosophy. It was a merry meal. Woolley was at his best. He talked of London and of his beloved Devon. We talked of Shanghai and we drank to President Roosevelt and to Churchill and to Chiang Kai-shek. We would rest the next day, the magistrate said. There was a luncheon he would like me to attend, if I would. The teachers of the town school would like to have me speak to them.

Woolley laughed loudly and said he was thankful that he did not know Chinese. The brandy made us sleepy and our beds were comfortable. It was about the most pleasant night we had had in nearly three years. It was October 20th. We had been out just fourteen days.

The luncheon next day was pleasant. The story of our escape had spread around the town and we were distinct celebrities. I talked to the assembled teachers and local bigwigs about our escape and then they asked questions.

The next morning we left by sampan. The miserable weather was still with us. So were Tong and Chao, smiling as usual, constantly on the alert, now feeling better because guns and knives hung from their belts again. Our pleasant interval was almost over, they warned us. Soon we would once more be in Jap-occupied country.

«« CHAPTER TWELVE »»

WE TRAVELED two days by sampan, accompanied by a group of thirty soldiers. The tommy guns they carried gave us a comfortable feeling of security. Except for the rain, the trip was pleasant enough. At night we camped on the banks of canals and streams. We had good bedding and heavy quilts. We were approaching Japanese territory again and guards were posted each night. The canals grew narrower as we approached hilly country.

Finally we had to abandon our sampans. Henceforth we would have to walk. I didn't look forward with any pleasure to that prospect. Neither did Woolley. Corporal Storey was still in pretty good shape. Well, he had nearly thirty years on me and about twenty on Woolley. The farther we went, the more our years began to tell, and the more did Storey's youth stand out. You can't beat the combination of youth, natural courage and a marine training.

We began the trek which was to bring us to a village some two days away. This village maintained direct liaison with General Tao Li, who was in charge of military affairs for the region. Once we reached General Tao Li, we'd be pushed along to American outposts. That was the theory. It was also a hope that we clung to, a hope that made us ignore, so far as was humanly possible, the pain in our feet. The country

was rough. There were few long flat expanses of rice paddies. There were few fields. We climbed hills, dragging ourselves up by snatching at scrubby trees and bushes. With my left leg completely stiff, I had to put my weight on my left heel and that soon began to burn. We walked for five hours, surrounded by men who acted as scouts. Storey smiled approvingly. "Good marine jungle tactics," he said. "These fellows know their business."

Our progress was very slow. The hard, lean Chinese swung along effortlessly. We watched them with envy as they scampered like goats over rocks and fallen trees. The rain fell gently, but I was sweating. Finally we reached an ancient temple. The abbot, who looked as old as the monastery, greeted us with dignity. He knew our story. I think he knew everything. He had the wisdom of the ages in his large sunken eyes. He brought us to a table where lunch was ready. The abbot was a highly educated man and talked perfect English. He had been a scholar, a university professor, but some ten years ago he had retired from life, he explained, to spend the rest of his days in peace and contemplation.

"And now," I couldn't help but say, "your peaceful life consists of helping escaping fugitives like ourselves."

He smiled. "I am Chinese, after all," he said simply.

The more I traveled through this back country, the more convinced I became that Japan could never subdue China. Japan might beat one army; factional disputes between Chinese armies might result in temporary disaster; Japanese could temporarily enslave isolated portions of China, but

eventually men like the abbot and millions like him would win.

I have heard very few Chinese speak Japanese. On the other hand, the Japs had to learn Chinese to administer conquered provinces. That is typical of the Chinese. They would not abandon the ways of their fathers, the language of their ancestors. They would make no concessions to the invaders. There are some who are disgusted because the Chinese have not fought enough. But the land, and the antiquity of their race have fought passively for them. I have never heard a single instance where the Japs secured whole-hearted cooperation from any group of Chinese. Of course there are some out-and-out Chinese traitors. But the mass of the people have never accepted the Jap occupation as anything but a temporary inconvenience. I asked the abbot if he agreed with me. He did, wholeheartedly.

We set off again. The trails were wet and slippery and we kept falling all the time. My knee was tightening up. I couldn't bend it even a fraction of an inch. Then finally it gave out altogether. I just tumbled down in a heap, trying not to scream. Two soldiers raised me to my feet, but when they relaxed their hold I collapsed again. The leg just wouldn't bear my weight. There was no feeling in it.

"We'll have to get a chair," Woolley said, "and carry him."

I lay there while they went searching for a chair. Chairs are not very common in the hills of China, but they found a farmhouse and commandeered an old grandmother's chair. The men cut bamboo poles and attached them to the sides of the chair. From now on I would ride. We had a few coolies with us, civilian followers of the army. Once the

bamboo poles were fixed, I climbed in and two coolies carried me. It was hard going for them because we seldom had any flat stretches. Tong and Chao watched them carefully. As they tired, Chao kidded them along. Tong was not a kidding man. He pulled out his knife and said, very seriously, "If you drop the chair, I will cut your throats." They looked at Tong with concern. He meant it. Human life, I fear, meant very little to Tong. His responsibility of delivering us safely meant a great deal. We kept on, even when darkness came. The two tired coolies were replaced by two fresh ones. I felt completely futile and useless. I hated to see Woolley and Storey stumbling along painfully while I rode in state.

It was eleven o'clock before we reached the village which was our destination. Runners had gone ahead to tell them of our arrival. Once again we were quartered at the magistrate's house. This was Magistrate Chang, young, brightly alert, a highly competent man, I judged. There were beds waiting for us, beds with sheets and clean quilts. There was food and the comforting presence of Magistrate Chang.

He explained that there were no Japs in the vicinity. We were quite safe here. The nearest large detachment of Jap soldiers was ten miles away. Ten miles didn't seem too safe a margin to me, but the magistrate explained that General Tao Li had patrols out and that any movements by the Japs was always reported immediately. General Tao Li would visit us the next day, he added.

I didn't sleep much that night. Perhaps the bed was too comfortable. Perhaps my leg pained too much. I had dreams of surgeons with saws and knives coming at me to amputate

my leg. I had tried to keep the thought of gangrene out of my mind. My leg was almost completely black and I knew that a hundred small blood vessels had broken and that the blood had congealed and might very easily cause gangrene. I didn't think of this when I was awake, but when I slept my subconscious mind took charge. When I awoke I found that I was bathed in sweat. It was a horrible day, with the rain now really pouring down. Around noon the General was announced.

General Tao Li was a big man. He weighed about 195, and he was six feet tall. He shook hands warmly. He knew all about us and had plans all ready. About three days' travel from here there was an American outpost, a very small outpost, he said, but it had a radio and was in constant communication with Chungking. We would go to a town near this outpost. From there we could send messages to Chungking and receive instructions on how to continue. There were some emergency landing fields ahead of us and it might be possible for a plane to be sent. It was still a long walk to Chungking, or even to Kunming. Meanwhile, we had better rest a couple of days.

"If you will leave everything to me?" he suggested.

"My God, General, of course," I breathed thankfully.

That decided, the General sat down and talked. He was a vital man, physically and mentally. He was what we loosely call a war lord. War was his profession. Everything he said made me think that he was undoubtedly a great soldier and a great leader. He commanded the whole region, an area of thousands of square miles. He explained his position. Yes,

of course, he came under the Chungking government, but the capital was far, far away.

"Chungking does not exactly know what we are up against here," he explained. "For instance, last week I received orders to destroy all bridges in this neighborhood. The Japanese are getting ready to attack, and of course blowing up and burning the bridges would slow their advance. But Chungking doesn't realize that I am in a position to defend the bridges. I see no reason to blow them up when I can hold the Japanese off. So I have not destroyed the bridges," he laughed.

It was not the kind of military discipline that Woolley, Storey and I understood, but it did make good sense in view of the fact that he was on the spot and knew the country well and knew the exact strength of the Japs.

"You see, in matters of strategic warfare Chungking is supreme," the General smiled. "But in tactical matters concerning my army I feel that I am the best judge."

The General left, saying that he would let us know when we were to start. He would send a detachment of men for us. We climbed back into bed. A doctor came and shook his head when he saw our feet. Even iron man Storey was weakening. His feet, too, were now nothing but raw beef. The doctor dressed our feet but said that only rest could cure them.

"We'll rest when we get to Calcutta," Woolley said.

"That's a few thousand miles from here," the doctor said dryly.

"We'll make it all right, won't we, kid?"

"Of course, Commander. I never had any doubt of that," Storey smiled.

"There are perhaps a million Japs between us and Chungking," I reminded them. "You two act as though we could walk right through them."

"You good-for-nothing pessimist," Woolley said. "We'll make it, all right."

"There's a very good restaurant in Calcutta," I said.

"I know Calcutta, Smitty," Woolley said, "and the first night we are there, the party is on me. Just the three of us. We'll have the finest meal ever served in India. What'll we drink?"

"I might have a gin and lime first, with ice in it," I said thoughtfully, "and then Scotch and water from there on."

"Cold beer is what I've been dreaming of," Storey broke in.

"Whisky? Beer? Are you men crazy?" Woolley was disgusted. "We'll have champagne. We'll be celebrating and champagne is the drink to celebrate on. And what about steak?"

"I'll have steak," Storey said promptly. "And hashed brown potatoes."

"How about a fried egg on the steak?" I suggested.

Storey nodded thoughtfully. "Sure, I'll go for that."

"I think I'll have lobster," I said.

"God Almighty," Woolley breathed. "I'd forgotten about lobsters! Do you think we could get Colchester oysters in Calcutta, Smitty?"

"I've never liked them much. They're green-looking. I like Cotuits or the big Blue Points."

"Smitty, I can take a lot from you," Woolley said, "but say nothing against Colchester oysters. With a dash of lemon maybe, and nothing else."

"I like horseradish on mine," I told him, "and a real hot sauce with tabasco in it."

"Sure, that hides the taste of the oyster," he said triumphantly. "With Colchesters you don't have to do that."

"Could I have a shrimp cocktail instead of oysters?" Storey asked mildly.

Woolley slapped him on the back. "You can have—you can have anything there is in Calcutta. When we get out of here, there's nothing going to be too good for you, Storey lad."

"Well, let's get to Calcutta before you promise anything else," I told Woolley.

We had two fine days of resting. The magistrate took good care of us. And then on the morning of the third day a group of general Tao Li's men came for us. Tong and Chao said that this was as far as they were to go. They had delivered us to General Tao Li. Now they had to return. I tried to make them take some money. They wouldn't. No one seemed to want our damned money. We hated to part with Tong and Chao. We shook hands with them and saw them leave with real regret. As we were about to take off a runner came dashing up. The General had sent an order for us to wait. He didn't say why. We just waited. We waited all afternoon and then another runner came to tell us it was all right to leave now. We were mildly puzzled at the delay but it was soon explained.

Our detachment consisted of about twenty men, with four

coolies to carry me in my chair. We traveled about three hours, and then reached a bridge across a creek. As before, we had scouts ahead and men guarding some three hundred yards on either side of us. When we reached the bridge we found out why there had been a delay. The Japs had learned that we were in the vicinity. They had apparently sent men to guard each bridge that we might conceivably have to cross. They had sent thirty men to watch this bridge. General Tao Li's Intelligence must have been very good. He heard of it and dispatched a force to surround the Japs waiting to ambush us at this point. They had been very successful. The bodies of thirty Jap soldiers lay there in the road. It is a cruel war the Japs and the Chinese fight. There is no quarter given on either side. We looked at the bodies of the Japs with satisfaction. If General Tao Li's men hadn't gotten them they would have gotten us. War does not make you hard or callous. I couldn't bear the sight of a Jap soldier suffering intensely, but the bodies of these dead Japs left me cold. I shuddered to think of what would have happened had the General not learned of the ambush. Had we been caught we would have been questioned thoroughly. The Japs would want to know the names of those who had helped us along the route. I had seen enough of their questioning to know how difficult it would have been for us to hold out. Perhaps we could have held out until death released us, but I'm not sure.

"You were talking about Calcutta last night," I reminded Woolley. "You figured that we were as good as there. Maybe it's going to be tougher than you think."

"Maybe you're right, Smitty, but stop being such a pes-

simist." Woolley glanced back at the bodies a bit regretfully. I really think he and Storey were disappointed because we hadn't walked into the ambush. Both felt a white-hot hatred for the Japs; a hatred that could only be satisfied by actual combat with them. They would love to have had a chance to slug it out with them. We had been taking it so long it would have been satisfactory to dish it out a bit. But in my condition I couldn't have fought my way out of a cellophane bag.

We continued along the narrow trails which made the job of carrying me very difficult. The constant rains had swollen the mountain streams into fiercely rushing torrents. Many plank bridges had been swept away and we had to ford the swollen waters. Storey and Woolley slipped more than once under the lash of the current. Soldiers helped them up, but it was easy to see that they were both growing weaker.

The leader of the detachment explained to me that we had only about two really tough days ahead of us. Then we would be through this part of the Jap lines. A couple of hundred free miles lay ahead of us, territory completely in Chinese hands. But for the next two days we'd have to be careful. The lines of the Jap soldiery were rather mobile. They had various headquarters perhaps fifteen miles apart where they had fairly large units. In between these headquarters they had wandering patrols. Our problem was to escape observation by these patrols. The bad weather would help us, he said. It had been raining now almost constantly for a month. That got the Jap morale down, he explained. They kept thinking of their sunny homeland, and the more they thought of it the more disgusted they became

with their present position. This state of mind did not contribute to their mental alertness. Their patrols were not as good and their observation not as keen as it was in good weather.

Long after dark we found ourselves in a village. We slept well that night and took off early the next morning. The rain had stopped and a brilliant sun was pouring down. Its warmth felt good. Now we hit one of the most beautiful parts of the world. We skirted a mountain and came into a valley.

The valley was green and cool. There was a monastery on top of the mountain and the valley belonged to the monks. These monks had a rule that nothing could be killed. A deer dashed across our path and then stopped to look at the strange sight we made. Tall trees towered above us; trees known as weeping pines. Storey said he thought they were sequoias. Woolley said he didn't give a damn what they were; they couldn't touch the New Forest. The valley was alive with color. Wild flowers, their brilliance brought out by the rain, covered the slopes of the valley. There were rich, cream-colored flowers the size of camellias. Their centers were bright red. Pheasants, startled by our approach, whirled by. Streams bisected the valley, streams filled with clear, cool water and trout, which floated lazily close to the banks where the water was quiet.

"Maybe those monks up there have something," I called to Woolley.

"They picked out a nice spot," he admitted.

"There are parts of Georgia like this," I said. Woolley snorted. We swung through the valley. The peaceful country

seemed to have an effect on the soldiers. They laughed and chatted happily. This was, in truth, Shangri-la. Looking around, you couldn't believe that war was going on just over the hills. You couldn't believe that decent, honest people were being tortured and made to slave by a foreign race. Maybe those monks up there did have something. Violence, killing, greed—these had no part in their secluded lives. They lived in the midst of beauty and peace. I thought of what one company of Japs would do to this valley in an afternoon. They'd come like a scourge killing the deer and the pheasant, despoiling the streams, making the valley ugly by their very presence. And sooner or later they would find this valley as they had found a thousand others like it.

We passed through the valley and, as we left it, the rain came again. Just after dark we reached a large town. It was large enough to have a hotel. Rooms were waiting for us. The inevitable magistrate appeared. He knew our story. Apparently a great many messages had been going back and forth. He asked us to go with him. He brought us to a large house. We went in and then we gasped. A tall, good-looking man in the uniform of the United States Army stood there, smiling. He saluted us and we saluted back. He was an army warrant officer stationed in the small outpost that General Tao Li had mentioned. It was not far from here, he said.

"You are absolutely safe here," he said. "There are no Japs in this part of the country. But come, there is food waiting, and how about a drink?"

"Of what?" Woolley asked, hoping against hope.

"I have some Scotch," he said.

We stayed up most of the night talking to him. I can't give his name. He's one of the thousands of unsung heroes the public will never hear about. He's probably out there now at some other lonely outpost gathering information, sending it back to Chungking; acting as liaison between the vast part of unknown China and our military officials. We ate and drank and really felt as though we were "out." There were still many hundreds of miles between us and Chungking, and a good part of that was in Jap hands, but now we were in actual touch with our Army. Our dream of freedom was beginning to assume a slightly more tangible form.

"This is November 3rd," Woolley said. "I feel that we've accomplished our escape."

"November 3rd?" We've been on the run twenty-seven days," I said. "It seems like twenty-seven years."

"It rained all but two of those days," Storey reminded us.

"You've accomplished your escape," the warrant officer said. "Of course, you have a tough trip ahead of you still. However, I think the Army will help a bit. The American Navy has a hospital some three days travel from here. I have sent them a message telling them of your condition. Two medical corps men are on their way with the proper drugs you need. I suggest you rest here for three or four days, then travel to the hospital. A couple of weeks there ought to fix you up. The Army will take over then. As the General told you, there are a few emergency airfields not too far away and perhaps the Army can send a plane for you."

"This sounds too good to be true," I said.

"It isn't," he said. "It's all true. But there are difficulties. The traveling between here and the hospital is rough, and you'll have to walk. However, we'll give you a guard and some coolies to carry you. I really think," he added thoughtfully, "that the toughest part of your venture is behind you."

He questioned us thoroughly. He would send every bit of information we could give him to Chungking. He questioned us until our heads dropped with weariness and then he let us return to the hotel. It was the first time in nearly three years that we really felt free; really felt that we were part of a living world.

«« CHAPTER THIRTEEN »»

WE HAD three days of rest and then two pharmacists' mates turned up. They were stationed at a secret hospital three days' travel away. This hospital was manned by Americans for the use of Chinese of the section and incidentally to take care of any stray air crews which might crash in the neighborhood. The warrant officer had radioed the hospital our shoe sizes. The heavy shoes we had been wearing were pretty uncomfortable. The pharmacists' mates brought shoes with them. They were the size I'd worn for thirty years but now I couldn't force my swollen feet into them. Neither could Woolley or Storey get into theirs. We had to give up the fine American Army issue shoes. Storey was showing symptoms of malaria and the two medical aides loaded him with quinine. We set off eagerly with a guard of Chinese soldiers and a few coolies to carry my chair. I still couldn't walk. We were off on the last lap of our trip, but it is always that last lap which is the most nerve racking. We might run into some lone Jap patrol and the whole effort of the past month would have been in vain.

This was rugged country we had to go through. It was hilly and thick with underbrush and foliage. Woolley and Storey were stumbling constantly. Late that afternoon we stopped at a small village. The matriarch of the village asked

us to dinner. She turned out to be one of the most remarkable women I have ever met. She was quite old but very wise and very gracious. She received us as though she were a queen and we three subjects with whom she was well pleased. She herself sat at dinner with us, a rare occasion in the interior of China where the woman of the house usually superintends the cooking but seldom sits at the dinner table with strangers. She talked with us easily and with considerable intelligence. This woman lived in a small, obscure village. She had lived there for forty years. She had never seen a newspaper during that time nor did she have a radio, but I had the feeling that she would have been equally impressive at a dinner party in London or New York or Paris. She was a thoroughbred—a regal, charming woman. She was, I daresay, seventy. With dinner she served us Shao Shing wine, a wine that tastes like a good sherry. It was the best Chinese wine I had ever tasted and, as we sipped it, she talked.

She talked of the war. She had no distrust or dislike of foreigners, she said smilingly. In fact, unlike most Chinese in this part of China, she knew something about foreigners. No foreigner had ever visited this village during the forty years she had lived there, but she knew about foreigners. She had been born and brought up in far off Ning Po. Then her father had "arranged" a marriage in the age-old Chinese manner with a farmer in this village. The day she left Ning Po to come here to join the prospective husband whom she had never seen, she had seen three foreigners on the street.

"So you see," she said quite seriously, "I am not ignorant of foreigners."

She hadn't spoken to the three foreigners that day forty

years ago, but she had looked at them and, ever since, she felt that she understood them. I could not even smile at her naivete. I couldn't even laugh at her secretly because, as she talked on, I realized that she did understand foreigners. She understood Britain and she understood America and she felt that she understood Russia. She was concerned about Russia. She thought that Russia would need to expand and that she might wish to expand in the direction of China. She discussed the troubled condition of China and the various conflicting economic and military groups vying with each other for power. She talked with more understanding and intelligence about China than did most Chinese I knew in Shanghai. It was a stimulating evening. We slept at her home and the next morning were off again.

Finally Woolley had to give up. His feet were nothing but raw flesh, and he couldn't walk a step farther. The coolies fixed a chair for him. Storey, weak now from malaria, shook his head when I suggested that he too take to a chair. But a few hours later he had to give in. Our two pharmacists' mates and our Chinese soldiers did everything they could to ease our pain, but there just wasn't much they could do. Only a long rest would cure us. Our progress was slow but the coolies were strong. We had two really tough days of traveling. Then we came into a clearing and there was a low, clean-looking building. We had reached the hospital.

An American doctor was in charge. He had Chinese assistants whom he was training. We bathed and got into beds which had clean sheets and the doctor went to work on us. Woolley's feet were in terrible condition. The doctor peeled the nails off his toes. Strips of flesh hung from the soles of his

feet. I wasn't much better. Storey was very weak from malaria. But none of us cared. We were in an American hospital. True, we were still a long way from Chungking or Kunming, but we knew that others were worrying now about how to get us there. We didn't have to think—we only had to relax and get a little strength back. The doctor said he couldn't do anything about my hernia. I'd have to be fattened up for that operation. I weighed myself at the hospital. I weighed 120 pounds. I had weighed 190 pounds on December 8, 1941. For the first time I saw myself in a mirror and winced. The skin on my neck hung in folds. My cheeks were sunken. I was an awful-looking sight.

This little hospital was doing a great job. I can't mention the doctor's name, unfortunately. The Japs never forget the names of those who help escaping prisoners and, as long as this doctor remains in China, his work will have to be anonymous. Victims of Japanese torture were often brought to him. There was one such man when we arrived. He had been a farmer, but they had caught and suspected him of sabotage. They had lashed him with their thin steel rods until he was unconscious and then, as a lesson to the community, had buried him in mud up to his neck and had left him to die. It was winter and very cold. Forty-eight hours later he was found and brought to the hospital. His hands and feet were frozen. There was only a slight spark of life left in him, but the doctor and his assistants fanned that spark. His feet were gangrenous but although the doctor had to amputate both feet he managed to save the heels. He also saved the hands. Now this man who had been left for dead was hobbling around, exercising his hands. bringing life back to

them. Such cures were routine here in this small hospital far inside China.

While we lay in bed they found a tailor in a nearby village who made us clothes. It can be bitterly cold in China in November. They had no warm clothing at the hospital, but they did have plenty of army blankets. The tailor took our measurements and made us suits out of the blankets. They weren't very pretty but they were warm. Meanwhile radio messages had been going to and from Chungking. There was an emergency airport just a few days travel from the hospital. If we would be there November 25th a plane would come for us. We were impatient to get started. The doctor didn't like the idea, but we forgot about our feet when we thought that once aboard that plane real freedom would not be far away.

I don't like to think about that long trek from the hospital to the airport. It took us six days. Storey's malaria was worse. Our feet treated and bandaged were still in horrible condition. We were carried most of the way, but sometimes the trails were such that we had to walk. We had to climb steep hills and then descend the other side. It was about the worst traveling we had thus far encountered but we had only one thought in mind—once on that plane we'd be free men and we'd be with the United States Army. We refused to rest or to sleep. We were coming to the end of the rainbow and we were in a hurry to see what we'd find there. We reached the airport (just a cleared field) on November 23rd—just under seven weeks after our escape, during which time we had covered an estimated 700 miles. There were only two American mechanics there, leading a

lonely life. They were there just in case some plane which had to use the field might need repairs. We had to wait two days for the plane, and they were two long days. Late in the afternoon of November 25th we heard the sound of motors. We scanned the skies but couldn't see a sign of a plane. Lack of vitamins had dimmed our eyesight, and we blinked impatiently, each trying hard to be the first to spot it. The roar of the engines grew louder, and then, just over the treetops at the end of the field, came the plane. It was traveling very low. The pilot landed and taxied up to the small hut which served as headquarters for the mechanics. We hobbled over, and were met by a grinning young pilot. Within five minutes we were off for Kunming.

The big C-47 droned on steadily and the purr of its two engines was music in our ears. Darkness came. Far below we could see fires. We asked the pilot about them.

"We're over Japanese-held territory now," he said. "The Japs are widening their corridor. As they advance they burn the Chinese villages. Those are the fires below."

It was horrible to think of what was happening down there in those villages. I thought of the many kindly Chinese we had met since our escape. Below, men and women like them were losing their homes, were dying for no reason at all except that they had been born Chinese and their neighbors had cast covetous eyes on their homeland. This wasn't warfare down there. It was looting and killing and pillage. I don't think I ever hated the Japanese Army as much as I did that night looking down at half a dozen flaming villages.

We had to fly more than a hundred miles over Jap territory and then we headed for Kunming. The pilot landed the

plane nonchalantly and expertly and we stepped out on soil uncontaminated by the Japanese. Orders were waiting for us. We were to leave for Calcutta as soon as possible. It was great to be back in the Navy routine again, taking orders, letting someone else have the responsibility.

The flight to Calcutta took eighteen hours. We lay on the floor of the plane, resting our feet. And then finally—Calcutta. We were a grotesque-looking trio in our clothes of army blankets, but we couldn't have been received better had we been three visiting ambassadors. We were met by an old friend, Lieutenant Commander F. H. Smith, who was always known as India Smith. I was known in Calcutta as China Smith. Commander Smith had news for us.

"You're officially dead, you three," he said cheerfully. "The Japs announced your capture and execution some time ago. We managed to get word to the Japanese agents here that we believed that story and that the Navy now had you listed as officially dead."

"What does that mean?" I asked him.

"It means that you three have to keep under cover," he said. "Commander Woolley is to report to Mountbatten at Ceylon. You are to proceed to Washington to tell your story. You may have information that will be valuable to the Navy. But keep out of the way while you're here. There are some Jap agents in Calcutta who might get a reward for killing you if your identity was known. Incidentally, you cannot communicate with anyone at home—not even your wife."

Storey was sent to an enlisted men's barracks while I was put up at BOQ (Bachelor Officers' Quarters). There was a shortage of naval uniforms in Calcutta. The best they could

do for me was a marine private's outfit. We really slept that night, although it all seemed too good to be true. We were actually free and we no longer had to live with suspicion and fear. The Earl of Carrick was the ranking British Naval officer in Calcutta. He had a party for us the following night. Woolley had managed to get a decent uniform, but Storey and I didn't look exactly impressive in our privates' uniforms. We walked into the lovely home of our host. There were tables laden with beautiful food, and servants who asked, "What would you like to drink?" I had an ice-cold gin and lime, and it tasted wonderful. Woolley, Storey and I had arranged to leave early and hold that celebration we had planned. Carrick was the soul of hospitality, and his guests, ranking officers and diplomats, were kind and friendly. They asked no questions. They had been tipped off as to our status. But we weren't accustomed to crowds yet. We had lived alone too much since our capture. We found it impossible to indulge in casual conversation. Now and then I'd catch Woolley's eye, and I knew that he felt as I did. And Storey, too, was uneasy in the midst of all this rank. We finally slipped away.

We had obtained guns. We said that we wanted no bodyguards; if we had guns we could take care of ourselves. Then, too, the thought of Jap agents having designs on us seemed a bit too melodramatic to take seriously. Besides, we wanted to be alone and have that meal we had thought about so often.

Woolley had made arrangements, and we were given a small room in the best restaurant in Calcutta. We studied the menu thoroughly. It was hard to take our eyes away

from the long list of dishes. Woolley had ordered champagne. We sipped it slowly and toasted each other, and then Storey, our strong, silent man, said to me, "Now, you damned pessimist, will you finally admit that we have accomplished our escape?"

"I finally admit it," I laughed, and we filled our glasses and roared with laughter until the tears came to our eyes. Some kind of a nervous reaction was setting in, I suppose. We were almost hysterical with joy now—all three of us. We had lobster and steak and French fried potatoes and all the things we hadn't had for three years. The food was excellent and the wine was ice-cold and now we babbled happily. We hadn't done this much talking since we'd left the prison on October 6th. This was the last day of November. We'd been on the way nearly two months. We talked mostly of the Chinese and of our love for them. We remembered and talked about the risks they had run to save us. We talked of their kindness and about their refusal to accept our money.

"We'll never be able to pay them back," Woolley said solemnly.

"Suppose we each had a million dollars," Storey said thoughtfully. "What could we do for the Chinese?"

Maybe it was the wine. I think it went deeper than that, however. We sat there seriously considering what we would do for the Chinese if we each had a million dollars to spend. And we evolved this plan and, even though it was born in wine, it was a good plan. A great part of China is connected by waterways and canals. We could outfit dozens of houseboats. We would get doctors and nurses to go about the country in these houseboats, treating everyone who

needed medical treatment, free of charge. Millions of Chinese suffer from a skin disease that can be cured by the proper drugs. Our doctors would educate them as to diet and feed them the vitamins which are lacking in their staple meals. It seemed a wonderful plan that night in Calcutta. Maybe some day I can make that dream come true. It would, in a slight measure, repay the debt we owe the Chinese.

Fundamentally, the Chinese are good, fine people. Fundamentally, they are decent and honest. Of course there are worthless and traitorous Chinese, just as there are worthless and traitorous Americans—and in about the same proportion. We drank toasts that night to the dream that we had and we drank a Chinese toast—"Confusion to the Japanese," and we went home and slept, forgetting that our feet were not yet fit to be used for walking.

There was one man in Calcutta I wanted to see badly—the manager of the Calcutta branch of the Mercantile Bank of India. I owed this bank some money, and I wanted to straighten that out. Several months before I had been captured, I had invested in a Shanghai business enterprise. I put up all the capital I had and then went to the Shanghai branch of the Mercantile Bank to borrow more. Without hesitation they gave me what I asked for. The only collateral I had were my shares in the Shanghai business. Of course, when war came the business was taken over by the Japs, my shares were worthless and I still owed the Mercantile Bank a few thousand dollars.

I received permission to see the Calcutta manager. He was known to our naval authorities as a discreet man. I saw him and explained the situation.

"But we know all about that, Commander," he laughed. "You don't owe us anything. We still have your collateral."

"But the shares are worthless," I protested. "The Japs own everything in Shanghai."

"We both acted in good faith, Commander," he said earnestly. "The war won't last forever. Some day Shanghai will be free of Japs and then this business enterprise can be started again. We know every one of your associates in the company. All are old and valued clients of ours. And when the business gets on its feet again, why, that will be time enough to talk of paying back."

"But I have three years back pay coming," I said. "I want to pay that loan now."

"Come now, Commander," he laughed. "You'll need a long convalescence at home before you're ready for active duty. Now a long convalescence will mean considerable expense. Forget about that loan of ours until after the war. As a matter of fact, we'd be very happy to make any further loan you'd apply for. You've been dealing with us some twenty years or so now in our various branches around the world. Please allow us to let you have all the money you need."

I didn't need any money. But the incident is worth noting, however, to show how British banks operate. There is a stiffness about American banks that chills me. But the Mercantile of London, whether the branch be in Shanghai or Calcutta or Buenos Aires or God-knows-where, is a friendly institution. I think it is only the American who has never known the British who thinks of him as a cold, reserved man. I've known the British in almost every large port in the world and I've never met one of those cold reserved English-

men I'd heard and read about so much. I've found the English great people; good company, if you're lonely; good fighters, if you're in a bad spot; hospitable and generous, if you need them. This praise, incidentally, comes from an Irishman.

Storey and I emplaned, leaving Woolley at last, and set out for Washington, where we arrived December 6th.

Our Navy is not as hard-hearted as I am making out. I found afterwards that they had given Rita a cautious message telling her that I was alive and well. Then came a summons from Admiral Nimitz. I was to report to him immediately at Guam. The Navy doesn't waste time. I had hardly been given the order when I was off in a plane to San Francisco, then Pearl Harbor and finally Guam. I spent three weeks in the Pacific, talking, talking, talking. I was amazed at the knowledge Admiral Nimitz had of China and Japan. I doubt that I contributed much that he didn't know. He sent me to Admiral Spruance and I told my story again and still again.

I had one great desire—I wanted to see our fleet. When I was imprisoned I thought of our fleet in terms of the ships we had at Pearl Harbor. It was a small Navy, relatively speaking. Now? I heard stories of its might. I knew what it had done in the second battle of the Philippines. But I wanted to see it. Admiral Nimitz understood. He sent me in his own plane to see this fleet. It was far out to sea, but it didn't take this fast plane long to find it. I looked below me with dazed eyes. Now I understood. Ships stretched to the horizon; an outer, far-off screen of destroyers, and then cruisers and the big battlewagons and finally the flat tops. It was the

most thrilling sight I have ever seen, and I felt a new glow of pride that I was part of this Navy.

I was flown back to San Francisco. Naval Intelligence told me that although I was still officially dead, I could bring my wife to Washington with me. I phoned her. There was no answer. I got into a cab and went to the apartment she had taken. I rang the bell and then Rita opened the door and the long four and a half years of separation were as though they'd never been. Now I was home.

